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SHE WORE, AS ON THE PREVIOUS DAY, HER DAMASK DRESS AND HER CRAPE HAT

Les Misérables

by

Victor Hugo

Illustrated by

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PREFACE

So long as there shall exist, by reason of law and custom, a social condemnation, which, in the face of civilisation, artificially creates hells on earth, and complicates a destiny that is divine, with human fatality; so long as the three problems of the age—the degradation of man by poverty, the ruin of woman by starvation, and the dwarfing of childhood by physical and spiritual night—are not solved; so long as, in certain regions, social asphyxia shall be possible; in other words, and from a yet more extended point of view, so long as ignorance and misery remain on earth, books like this cannot be useless.

Hauteville House, 1862.

No longer is the abridgment of a classic condemned as a literary misdeed akin to plagiarism or the complete hoax. The era of the three and four decker novel is gone, and with it the false sanctity that preserved its integrity. Here, in this shortened version, is retained the magic of Hugo's style (there has been no rewriting, no tampering with the words as he set them down). Here are the street barricades and the sewers of Paris, and Waterloo with its hideous sunken road. Here is the sinister figure of the implacable Javert. Here are the heartbreaking story of Fantine and the heart-lifting story of Cosette and Marius. Here, above all, is the story of Jean Valjean as he follows his bitter *via crucis* through the byways of France to his great final redemption. What is not here in this abridgment is a great deal of special political pleading, obscure and local history and such matters which were important to the day when the book was written but are no longer so in the urgency of our present years. But the central story is here in all its color and drama, as powerful and exciting today as when it first appeared in ten volumes simultaneously in all the great capitals of the western world.

R. T. B.

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FANTINE

LES MISÉRABLES

BOOK I—THE FALL

THE NIGHT OF A DAY'S TRAMP

An hour before sunset, on the evening of a day in the beginning of October, 1815, a man travelling afoot entered the little town of D——. The few persons who at this time were at their windows or their doors, regarded this traveller with a sort of distrust. It would have been hard to find a passer-by more wretched in appearance. He was a man of middle height, stout and hardy, in the strength of maturity; he might have been forty-six or seven. A slouched leather cap half hid his face, bronzed by the sun and wind, and dripping with sweat. His shaggy breast was seen through the coarse yellow shirt which at the neck was fastened by a small silver anchor; he wore a cravat twisted like a rope; coarse blue trousers, worn and shabby, white on one knee, and with holes in the other; an old ragged grey blouse, patched on one side with a piece of green cloth sewed with twine: upon his back was a well-filled knapsack, strongly buckled and quite new. In his hand he carried an enormous knotted stick: his stockingless feet were in hobnailed shoes; his hair was cropped and his beard long.

The sweat, the heat, his long walk, and the dust, added an indescribable meanness to his tattered appearance.

His hair was shorn, but bristly, for it had begun to grow a little, and seemingly had not been cut for some time. Nobody knew him; he was evidently a traveller. Whence had he come? From the south—perhaps from the sea; for he was making his entrance into D—— by the same road by which, seven months before, the Emperor Napoleon went from Cannes to Paris. This man must have walked all day long; for he appeared very weary. Some women of the old city which is at the lower part of the town, had seen him stop under the trees of the boulevard Gassendi, and drink at the fountain which is at the end of the promenade. He must have been very thirsty, for some children who followed him, saw him stop not two hundred steps further on and drink again at the fountain in the market-place.

When he reached the corner of the Rue Poichevert he turned to the left and went towards the mayor's office. He went in, and a quarter of an hour afterwards he came out.

The man raised his cap humbly and saluted a gendarme who was seated near the door, upon the stone bench which General Drouot mounted on the fourth of March, to read to the terrified inhabitants of D—— the proclamation of the *Golfe Juan.*

Without returning his salutation, the gendarme looked at him attentively, watched him for some distance, and then went into the city hall.

There was then in D——, a good inn called *La Croix de Colbas;* its host was named Jacquin Labarre, a man held in some consideration in the town on account of his relationship with another Labarre, who kept an inn at Grenoble called *Trois Dauphins,* and who had served in the Guides.

The traveller turned his steps towards this inn, which was the best in the place, and went at once into the kitchen, which opened out of the street. All the ranges were fuming, and a great fire was burning briskly in the chimney-place. Mine host, who was at the same time head cook, was going from the fire place to the sauce-pans, very busy superintending an excellent dinner for some wagoners who were laughing and talking noisily in the next room. Whoever has travelled knows that nobody lives better than wagoners. A fat marmot, flanked by white partridges and goose, was turning on a long spit before the fire; upon the ranges were cooking two large carps from Lake Lauzet, and a trout from Lake Alloz.

The host, hearing the door open, and a new-comer enter, said, without raising his eyes from his ranges—

"What will monsieur have?"

"Something to eat and lodging."

"Nothing more easy," said mine host, but on turning his head and taking an observation of the traveller, he added, "for pay."

The man drew from his pocket a large leather purse, and answered, "I have money."

"Then," said mine host, "I am at your service."

The man put his purse back into his pocket, took off his knapsack and put it down hard by the door, and holding his stick in his hand, sat down on a low stool by the fire. D—— being in the mountains, the evenings of October are cold there.

However, as the host passed backwards and forwards, he kept a careful eye on the traveller.

"Is dinner almost ready?" said the man.

"Directly," said mine host.

While the new-comer was warming himself with his back turned, the worthy innkeeper, Jacquin Labarre, took a pencil from his pocket, and then tore off the corner of an old paper which he pulled from a little table near the window. On the margin he wrote a line or two, folded it, and handed the scrap of paper to a child, who appeared to serve him as lacquey and scullion at the same time. The innkeeper whispered a word to the boy, and he ran off in the direction of the mayor's office.

The traveller saw nothing of this.

He asked a second time: "Is dinner ready?"

"Yes; in a few moments," said the host.

The boy came back with a paper. The host unfolded it unhurriedly, as one who is expecting an answer. He seemed to read with attention, then throwing his head on one side, thought for a moment. Then he took a step towards the traveller, who seemed drowned in troublous thought.

"Monsieur," said he, "I cannot receive you."

The traveller half rose from his seat.

"Why? Are you afraid I shall not pay you, or do you want me to pay in advance? I have money, I tell you."

"It is not that."

"What then?"

"You have money—"

"Yes," said the man.

"And I," said the host; "I have no room."

"Well, put me in the stable," quietly replied the man.

"I cannot."

"Why?"

"Because the horses take all the room."

"Well," responded the man, "a corner in the garret; a truss of straw: we will see about that after dinner."

"I cannot give you any dinner."

This declaration, made in a measured but firm tone, appeared serious to the traveller. He got up.

"Ah, bah! but I am dying with hunger. I have walked since sunrise; I have travelled twelve leagues. I will pay, and I want something to eat."

"I have nothing," said the host.

The man burst into a laugh, and turned towards the fire-place and the ranges.

"Nothing! and all that?"

"All that is engaged."

"By whom?"

"By those persons, the wagoners."

"How many are there of them?"

"Twelve."

"There is enough there for twenty."

"They have engaged and paid for it all in advance."

The man sat down again and said, without raising his voice: "I am at an inn. I am hungry, and I shall stay."

The host bent down to his ear, and said in a voice which made him tremble:

"Go away!"

At these words the traveller, who was bent over, poking some embers in the fire with the iron-shod end of his stick, turned suddenly around, and opened his mouth, as if to reply, when the host, looking steadily at him, added in the same low tone: "Stop, no more of that. Shall I tell you your name? your name is Jean Valjean, now shall I tell you *who* you are? When I saw you enter, I suspected something. I sent to the mayor's office, and here is the reply. Can you read?" So saying he held towards him the open paper, which had just come from the mayor. The man cast a look upon it; the innkeeper, after a short silence, said: "It is my custom to be polite to all: Go!"

The man bowed his head, picked up his knapsack, and went out.

He took the principal street; he walked at random, slinking near the houses like a sad and humiliated man: he did not once turn around. If he had turned, he would have seen the innkeeper of the *Croix de Colbas,* standing in his doorway with all his guests, and the passers-by gathered about him, speaking excitedly, and pointing him out; and from the looks of fear and distrust which were exchanged, he would have guessed that before long his arrival would be the talk of the whole town.

He saw nothing of all this: people overwhelmed with trouble do not look behind; they know only too well that misfortune follows them.

He walked along in this way some time, going by chance down streets unknown to him, and forgetting fatigue, as is the case in sorrow. Suddenly he felt a pang of hunger; night was at hand, and he looked around to see if he could not discover a lodging.

The good inn was closed against him: he sought some humble tavern, some poor cellar.

Just then a light shone at the end of the street; he saw a pine branch, hanging by an iron bracket, against the white sky of the twilight. He went thither.

It was a tavern in the Rue Chaffaut.

The traveller stopped a moment and looked in at the little window upon the low hall of the tavern, lighted by a small lamp upon a table, and a great fire in the chimney place. Some men were drinking, and the host was warming himself; an iron-pot hung over the fire seething in the blaze.

Two doors lead into this tavern, which is also a sort of eating-house—one from the street, the other from a small court full of rubbish.

The traveller did not dare to enter by the street door; he slipped into the court, stopped again, then timidly raised the latch, and pushed open the door.

"Who is it?" said the host.

"One who wants supper and a bed."

"All right: here you can sup and sleep."

He went in, all the men who were drinking turned towards him; the lamp shining on one side of this face, the firelight on the other, they examined him for some time as he was taking off his knapsack.

The host said to him: "There is the fire; the supper is cooking in the pot; come and warm yourself, comrade."

He seated himself near the fireplace and stretched his feet out towards the fire, half dead with fatigue: an inviting odour came from the pot. All that could be seen of his face under his slouched cap assumed a vague appearance of comfort, which tempered the sorrowful aspect given him by long-continued suffering.

His profile was strong, energetic, and sad; a physiognomy strangely marked: at first it appeared humble, but it soon became severe. His eye shone beneath his eyebrows like a fire beneath a thicket.

However, one of the men at the table was a fisherman who had put up his horse at the stable of Labarre's inn before entering the tavern of the Rue de Chaffaut. It so happened that he had met, that same morning, this suspicious-looking stranger travelling between Bras d'Asse and—I forget the place, I think it is Escoublon. Now, on meeting him, the man, who seemed already very much fatigued, had asked him to take him on behind, to which the fisherman responded only by doubling his pace. The fisherman, half an hour before, had been one of the throng about Jacquin Labarre, and had himself related his unpleasant meeting with him to the people of the *Croix de Colbas.* He beckoned to the tavern-keeper to come to him, which he did. They exchanged a few words in a low voice; the traveller had again relapsed into thought.

The tavern-keeper returned to the fire, and laying his hand roughly on his shoulder, said harshly:

"You are going to clear out from here!"

The stranger turned round and said mildly,

"Ah! Do you know?"

"Yes."

"They sent me away from the other inn."

"And we turn you out of this."

"Where would you have me go."

"Somewhere else."

The man took up his stick and knapsack, and went off. As he went out, some children who had followed him from the *Croix de Colbas,* and seemed to be waiting for him, threw stones at him. He turned angrily and threatened them with his stick, and they scattered like a flock of birds.

He passed the prison: an iron chain hung from the door attached tc a bell. He rang.

The grating opened.

"Monsieur Turnkey," said he, taking off his cap respectfully, "will you open and let me stay here to-night?"

A voice answered:

"A prison is not a tavern: get yourself arrested and we will open."

It was about eight o'clock in the evening: as he did not know the streets, he walked at hazard.

So he came to the prefecture, then to the seminary; on passing by the Cathedral square, he shook his fist at the church.

At the corner of this square stands a printing-office; there were first printed the proclamations of the emperor, and the Imperial Guard to the army, brought from the island of Elba, and dictated by Napoleon himself.

Exhausted with fatigue, and hoping for nothing better, he lay down on a stone bench in front of this printing-office.

Just then an old woman came out of the church. She saw the man lying there in the dark, and said:

"What are you doing there, my friend?"

He replied harshly, and with anger in his tone:

"You see, my good woman, I am going to sleep."

"Upon the bench?" said she.

"For nineteen years I have had a wooden mattress," said the man; "to-night I have a stone one."

"You have been a soldier?"

"Yes, my good woman, a soldier."

"Why don't you go to the inn?"

"Because I have no money."

"Alas!" said Madame de R——, "I have only four sous in my purse."

"Give them then." The man took the four sous, and Madame de R—— continued:

"You cannot find lodging for so little in an inn. But have you tried? You cannot pass the night so. You must be cold and hungry. They should give you lodging for charity."

"I have knocked at every door."

"Well, what then?"

"Everybody has driven me away."

The good woman touched the man's arm and pointed out to him, on the other side of the square, a little low house beside the bishop's palace.

"You have knocked at every door?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Have you knocked at that one there?"

"No."

"Knock there."

PRUDENCE COMMENDED TO WISDOM

That evening, after his walk in the town, the Bishop of D—— remained quite late in his room. He was busy with his great work on Duty, which unfortunately is left incomplete. He carefully dissected all that the Fathers and Doctors have said on this serious topic. His book was divided into two parts: First, the duties of all: Secondly, the duties of each, according to his position in life.

At eight o'clock he was still at work, writing with some inconvenience on little slips of paper, with a large book open on his knees, when Madame Magloire, as usual, came in to take the silver from the panel near the bed. A moment after, the bishop, knowing that the table was laid, and that his sister was perhaps waiting, closed his book and went into the dining-room.

This dining-room was an oblong apartment, with a fireplace, and with a door upon the street, and a window opening into the garden.

Madame Magloire had just finished placing the plates.

While she was arranging the table, she was talking with Mademoiselle Baptistine.

The lamp was on the table, which was near the fireplace, where a good fire was burning.

Just as the bishop entered, Madame Magloire was speaking with some warmth. She was talking to *Mademoiselle* upon a familiar subject, and one to which the bishop was quite accustomed. It was a discussion on the means of fastening the front door.

It seems that while Madame Magloire was out making provision for supper, she had heard the news in sundry places. There was talk that an ill-favoured runaway, a suspicious vagabond, had arrived and was lurking somewhere in the town, and that some unpleasant adventures might befall those who should come home late that night; besides, that the police was very bad, as the prefect and the mayor did not like one another, and were hoping to injure each other by untoward events; that it was the part of wise people to be their own police, and to protect their own persons; and that every one ought to be careful to shut up, bolt, and bar his house properly, and *secure his door thoroughly.*

Madame Magloire dwelt upon these last words; but the bishop, having come from a cold room, seated himself before the fire and began to warm himself, and then, he was thinking of something else. He did not hear a word of what was let fall by Madame Magloire, and she repeated it. Then Mademoiselle Baptistine, endeavouring to satisfy Madame Magloire without displeasing her brother, ventured to say timidly:

"Brother, do you hear what Madame Magloire says?"

"I heard something of it indistinctly," said the bishop. Then turning his chair half round, putting his hands on his knees, and raising towards the old servant his cordial and good-humoured face, which the firelight shone upon, he said: "Well, well! what is the matter? Are we in any great danger?"

Then Madame Magloire began her story again, unconsciously exaggerating it a little. It appeared that a bare-footed gipsy man, a sort of dangerous beggar, was in the town. He had gone for lodging to Jacquin Labarre, who had refused to receive him; he had been seen to enter the town by the boulevard Gassendi, and to roam through the street at dusk. A man with a knapsack and a rope, and a terrible-looking face.

"Indeed!" said the bishop.

This readiness to question her encouraged Madame Magloire; it seemed to indicate that the bishop was really well-nigh alarmed. She continued triumphantly: "Yes, monseigneur; it is true. There will something happen to-night in the town: everybody says so. The police is so badly organised (a convenient repetition). To live in this mountainous country, and not even to have street lamps! If one goes out, it is dark as a pocket. And I say, monseigneur, and mademoiselle says also—"

"Me?" interrupted the sister; "I say nothing. Whatever my brother does is well done."

Madame Magloire went on as if she had not heard this protestation:

"We say that this house is not safe at all; and if monseigneur will permit me, I will go and tell Paulin Musebois, the locksmith, to come and put the old bolts in the door again; they are there, and it will take but a minute. I say we must have bolts, were it only for to-night; for I say that a door which opens by a latch on the outside to the first comer, nothing could be more horrible: and then monseigneur has the habit of always saying 'Come in,' even at midnight. But, my goodness! there is no need even to ask leave—"

At this moment there was a violent knock on the door.

"Come in!" said the bishop.

THE HEROISM OF PASSIVE OBEDIENCE

The door opened.

It opened quickly, quite wide, as if pushed by some one boldly and with energy.

A man entered.

That man, we know already; it was the traveller we have seen wandering about in search of a lodging.

He came in, took one step, and paused, leaving the door open behind him. He had his knapsack on his back, his stick in his hand, and a rough, hard, tired, and fierce look in his eyes, as seen by the firelight. He was hideous. It was an apparition of ill omen.

Madame Magloire had not even the strength to scream. She stood trembling with her mouth open.

Mademoiselle Baptistine turned, saw the man enter, and started up half alarmed; then, slowly turning back again towards the fire, she looked at her brother, and her face resumed its usual calmness and serenity.

The bishop looked upon the man with a tranquil eye.

As he was opening his mouth to speak, doubtless to ask the stranger what he wanted, the man, leaning with both hands on his club, glanced from one to another in turn, and without waiting for the bishop to speak, said in a loud voice:

"See here! My name is Jean Valjean. I am a convict; I have been nineteen years in the galleys. Four days ago I was set free, and started for Pontarlier, which is my destination; during those four days I have walked from Toulon. To-day I have walked twelve leagues. When I reached this place this evening I went to an inn, and they sent me away on account of my yellow passport, which I had shown at the mayor's office, as was necessary. I went to another inn; they said: 'Get out!' It was the same with one as with another; nobody would have me. I went to the prison, and the turnkey would not let me in. There in the square I lay down upon a stone; a good woman showed me your house, and said: 'Knock there!' I have knocked. What is this place? Are you an inn? I have money; my savings, one hundred and nine francs and fifteen sous which I have earned in the galleys by my work for nineteen years. I will pay. What do I care? I have money. I am very tired—twelve leagues on foot, and I am so hungry. Can I stay?"

"Madame Magloire," said the bishop, "put on another plate."

The man took three steps, and came near the lamp which stood on the table. "Stop," he exclaimed; as if he had not been understood, "not that, did you understand me? I am a galley-slave—a convict—I am just from the galleys." He drew from his pocket a large sheet of yellow paper, which he unfolded. "There is my passport, yellow as you see. That is enough to have me kicked out wherever I go. Will you read it? I know how to read, I do. I learned in the galleys. There is a school there for those who care for it. See, here is what they have put in the passport: 'Jean Valjean, a liberated convict, native of ——,' you don't care for that, 'has been nineteen years in the galleys; five years for burglary; fourteen years for having attempted four times to escape. This man is very dangerous. There you have it! Everybody has thrust me out; will you receive me? Is this an inn? Can you give me something to eat, and a place to sleep? Have you a stable?"

"Madame Magloire," said the bishop, "put some sheets on the bed in the alcove."

Madame Magloire went out to fulfil her orders.

The bishop turned to the man:

"Monsieur, sit down and warm yourself: we are going to take supper presently, and your bed will be made ready while you sup."

At last the man quite understood; his face, the expression of which till then had been gloomy and hard, now expressed stupefaction, doubt, and joy, and became absolutely wonderful. He began to stutter like a madman.

"True? What! You will keep me? you won't drive me away? a convict! You call me *Monsieur* and don't say 'Get out, dog!' as everybody else does. I thought that you would send me away, so I told first off who I am. Oh! the fine woman who sent me here! I shall have a supper! a bed like other people with mattress and sheets —a bed! It is nineteen years that I have not slept on a bed. You are really willing that I should stay? You are good people! Besides I have money: I will pay well. I beg your pardon, Monsieur Innkeeper, what is your name? I will pay all you say. You are a fine man. You are an innkeeper, an't you?"

"I am a priest who lives here," said the bishop.

While he was talking, the bishop shut the door, which he had left wide open.

Madame Magloire brought in a plate and set it on the table.

"Madame Magloire," said the bishop, "put this plate as near the fire as you can." Then turning towards his guest, he added: "The night wind is raw in the Alps; you must be cold, monsieur."

Every time he said this word monsieur, with his gently solemn, and heartily hospitable voice, the man's countenance lighted up. *Monsieur* to a convict, is a glass of water to a man dying of thirst at sea. Ignominy thirsts for respect.

"The lamp," said the bishop, "gives a very poor light."

Madame Magloire understood him, and going to his bed-chamber, took from the mantel the two silver candlesticks, lighted the candles, and placed them on the table.

Meantime she had served up supper; it consisted of soup made of water, oil, bread, and salt, a little pork, a scrap of mutton, a few figs, a green cheese, and a large loaf of rye bread. She had, without asking, added to the usual dinner of the bishop a bottle of fine old Mauves wine.

The bishop's countenance was lighted up with this expression of pleasure, peculiar to hospitable natures. "To supper!" he said briskly, as was his habit when he had a guest. He seated the man at his right. Mademoiselle Baptistine, perfectly quiet and natural, took her place at his left.

The bishop said the blessing, and then served the soup himself, according to his usual custom. The man fell to, eating greedily.

Suddenly the bishop said. "It seems to me something is lacking on the table."

The fact was, that Madame Magloire had set out only the three plates which were necessary. Now it was the custom of the house, when the bishop had any one to supper, to set all six of the silver plates on the table, an innocent display. This graceful appearance of luxury was a sort of childlikeness which was full of charm in this gentle but austere household, which elevated poverty to dignity.

Madame Magloire understood the remark; without a word she went out, and a moment afterwards the three plates for which the bishop had asked were shining on the cloth, symmetrically arranged before each of the three guests. During the meal there were few words spoken. The visitor was plainly weary and it was not long before they made ready for the night.

TRANQUILLITY

After having said good-night to his sister, Monseigneur Bienvenu took one of the silver candlesticks from the table, handed the other to his guest, and said to him:

"Monsieur, I will show you to your room."

The man followed him.

The house was so arranged that one could reach the alcove in the oratory only by passing through the bishop's sleeping chamber. Just as they were passing through his room Madame Magloire was putting up the silver in the cupboard at the head of the bed. It was the last thing she did every night before going to bed.

The bishop left his guest in the alcove, before a clean white bed. The man set down the candlestick upon a small table.

"Come," said the bishop, "a good night's rest to you: to-morrow morning, before you go, you shall have a cup of warm milk from our cows."

"Thank you, Monsieur l'Abbé," said the man.

Scarcely had he pronounced these words of peace, when suddenly he made a singular motion which would have chilled the two good women of the house with horror, had they witnessed it. Even now it is hard for us to understand what impulse he obeyed at that moment. Did he intend to give a warning or to throw out a menace? Or was he simply obeying a sort of instinctive impulse, obscure ever to himself? He turned abruptly towards the old man, crossed his arms, and casting a wild look upon his host, exclaimed in a harsh voice:

"Ah, now, indeed! You lodge me in your house, as near you as that!"

He checked himself, and added, with a laugh, in which there was something horrible:

"Have you reflected upon it? Who tells you that I am not a murderer?"

The bishop responded:

"God will take care of that."

Then with gravity, moving his lips like one praying or talking to himself, he raised two fingers of his right hand and blessed the man, who, however, did not bow; and without turning his head or looking behind him, went into his chamber.

When the alcove was occupied, a heavy serge curtain was drawn in the oratory, concealing the altar. Before this curtain the bishop knelt as he passed out, and offered a short prayer.

A moment afterwards he was walking in the garden, surrendering mind and soul to a dreamy contemplation of these grand and mysterious works of God, which night makes visible to the eye.

As to the man, he was so completely exhausted that he did not even avail himself of the clean white sheets; he blew out the candle with his nostril, after the manner of convicts, and fell on the bed, dressed as he was, into a sound sleep.

Midnight struck as the bishop came back to his chamber.

A few moments afterwards all in the little house slept.

JEAN VALJEAN

Towards the middle of the night, Jean Valjean awoke.

Jean Valjean was born of a poor peasant family of Brie. In his childhood he had not been taught to read: when he was grown up, he chose the occupation of a pruner at Faverolles. His mother's name was Jeanne Mathieu, his father's Jean Valjean or Vlajean, probably a nickname, a contraction of *Voilà Jean.*

Jean Valjean was of a thoughtful disposition, but not sad, which is characteristic of affectionate natures. Upon the whole, however, there was something torpid and insignificant, in the appearance at least, of Jean Valjean. He had lost his parents when very young. His mother died of malpractice in a milk-fever: his father, a pruner before him, was killed by a fall from a tree. Jean Valjean now had but one relative left, his sister, a widow with seven children, girls and boys. The sister had brought up Jean Valjean, and, as long as her husband lived, she had taken care of her young brother. Her husband died, leaving the eldest of these children eight, the youngest one year old. Jean Valjean had just reached his twenty-fifth year: he took the father's place, and, in his turn, supported the sister who reared him. This he did naturally, as a duty, and even with a sort of moroseness on his part. His youth was spent in rough and ill-recompensed labour: he never was known to have a sweetheart; he had not time to be in love.

At night he came in weary and ate his soup without saying a word. While he was eating, his sister, *Mère Jeanne,* frequently took from his porringer the best of his meal; a bit of meat, a slice of pork, the heart of the cabbage, to give to one of her children. He went on eating, his head bent down nearly into the soup, his long hair falling over his dish, hiding his eyes, he did not seem to notice anything that was done. At Faverolles, not far from the house of the Valjeans, there was on the other side of the road a farmer's wife named Marie Claude; the Valjean children, who were always famished, sometimes went in their mother's name to borrow a pint of milk, which they would drink behind a hedge, or in some corner of the lane, snatching away the pitcher so greedily one from another, that the little girls would spill it upon their aprons and their necks; if their mother had known of this exploit she would have punished the delinquents severely. Jean Valjean, rough and grumbler as he was, paid Marie Claude; their mother never knew it, and so the children escaped.

He earned in the pruning season eighteen sous a day: after that he hired out as reaper, workman, teamster, or labourer. He did whatever he could find to do. His sister worked also, but what could she do with seven little children? It was a sad group, which misery was grasping and closing upon, little by little. There was a very severe winter; Jean had no work, the family had no bread; literally, no bread, and seven children.

One Sunday night, Maubert Isabeau, the baker on the Place de l'Eglise, in Faverolles, was just going to bed when he heard a violent blow against the barred window of his shop. He got down in time to see an arm thrust through the aperture made by the blow of a fist on the glass. The arm seized a loaf of bread and took it out. Isabeau rushed out; the thief used his legs valiantly; Isabeau pursued him and caught him. The thief had thrown away the bread, but his arm was still bleeding. It was Jean Valjean.

All that happened in 1795. Jean Valjean was brought before the tribunals of the time for "burglary at night, in an inhabited house." He had a gun which he used as well as any marksman in the world, and was something of a poacher, which hurt him, there being a naturel prejudice against poachers. The poacher, like the smuggler, approaches very nearly to the brigand. We must say, however, by the way, that there is yet a deep gulf between this race of men and the hideous assassin of the city. The poacher dwells in the forest, and the smuggler in the mountains or upon the sea; cities produce ferocious men, because they produce corrupt men; the mountains, the forest, and the sea, render men savage; they develop the fierce, but yet do not destroy the human.

Jean Valjean was found guilty: the terms of the code were explicit; in our civilisation there are fearful hours; such are those when the criminal law pronounces shipwreck upon a man. What a mournful moment is that in which society withdraws itself and gives up a thinking being for ever. Jean Valjean was sentenced to five years in the galleys.

Near the end of this fourth year, his chance of liberty came to Jean Valjean. His comrades helped him as they always do in that dreary place, and he escaped. He wandered two days in freedom through the fields; if it is freedom to be hunted, to turn your head each moment, to tremble at the least noise, to be afraid of everything, of the smoke of a chimney, the passing of a man, the baying of a dog, the gallop of a horse, the striking of a clock, of the day because you see, and of the night because you do not; of the road, of the bush, of sleep. During the evening of the second day he was retaken; he had neither eaten nor slept for thirty-six hours. The maritime tribunal extended his sentence three years for this attempt, which made eight. In the sixth year his turn of escape came again; he tried it, but failed again. He did not answer at roll-call, and the alarm cannon was fired. At night the people of the vicinity discovered him hidden beneath the keel of a vessel on the stocks; he resisted the galley guard which seized him. Escape and resistance. This the provisions of the special code punished by an addition of five years, two with the double chain. Thirteen years. The tenth year his turn came round again; he made another attempt with no better success. Three years for this new attempt. Sixteen years. And finally, I think it was in the thirteenth year, he made yet another, and was retaken after an absence of only four hours. Three years for these four hours. Nineteen years. In October, 1815, he was set at large: he had entered in 1796 for having broken a pane of glass, and taken a loaf of bread.

THE MAN AWAKES

As the cathedral clock struck two, Jean Valjean awoke.

What awakened him was, too good a bed. For nearly twenty years he had not slept in a bed, and, although he had not undressed, the sensation was too novel not to disturb his sleep.

He had slept something more than four hours. His fatigue had passed away. He was not accustomed to give many hours to repose.

He opened his eyes, and looked for a moment into the obscurity about him, then he closed them to go to sleep again.

When many diverse sensations have disturbed the day, when the mind is preoccupied, we can fall asleep once, but not a second time. Sleep comes at first much more readily than it comes again. Such was the case with Jean Valjean. He could not get to sleep again, and so he began to think.

He was in one of those moods in which the ideas we have in our minds are perturbed. There was a kind of vague ebb and flow in his brain. His oldest and latest memories floated about pell mell, and crossed each other confusedly, losing their own shapes, swelling beyond measure, then disappearing all at once, as if in a muddy and troubled stream. Many thoughts came to him, but there was one which continually presented itself, and which drove away all others. What that thought was, we shall tell directly. He had noticed the six silver plates and the large ladle that Madame Magloire had put on the table.

Those six silver plates took possession of him. There they were, within a few steps. At the very moment that he passed through the middle room to reach the one he was now in, the old servant was placing them in a little cupboard at the head of the bed. He had marked that cupboard well: on the right, coming from the dining-room. They were solid; and old silver. With the big ladle, they would bring at least two hundred francs, double what he had got for nineteen year's labour. True; he would have got more if the *"government"* had not *"robbed"* him.

His mind wavered a whole hour, and a long one, in fluctuation and in struggle. The clock struck three. He opened his eyes, rose up hastily in bed, reached out his arm and felt his haversack, which he had put into the corner of the alcove, then he thrust out his legs and placed his feet on the ground, and found himself, he knew not how, seated on his bed.

He remained for some time lost in thought in that attitude, which would have had a rather ominous look, had any one seen him there in the dusk—he only awake in the slumbering house. All at once he stooped down, took off his shoes, and put them softly upon the mat in front of the bed, then he resumed his thinking posture, and was still again.

In that hideous meditation, the ideas which we have been pointing out, troubled his brain without ceasing, entered, departed, returned, and became a sort of weight upon him; and then he thought, too, he knew not why, and with that mechanical obstinacy that belongs to reverie, of a convict named Brevet, whom he had known in the galleys, and whose trousers were only held up by a single knit cotton suspender. The checked pattern of that suspender came continually before his mind.

He continued in this situation, and would perhaps have remained there until daybreak, if the clock had not struck the quarter or the half-hour. The clock seemed to say to him: "Come along!"

He rose to his feet, hesitated for a moment longer, and listened; all was still in the house; he walked straight and cautiously towards the window, which he could discern. The night was not very dark; there was a full moon, across which large clouds were driving before the wind. This produced alternations of light and shade, out-of-doors eclipses and illuminations, and in-doors a kind of glimmer. This glimmer, enough to enable him to find his way, changing with the passing clouds, resembled that sort of livid light, which falls through the window of a dungeon before which men are passing and repassing. On reaching the window, Jean Valjean examined it. It had no bars, opened into the garden, and was fastened, according to the fashion of the country, with a little wedge only. He opened it; but as the cold, keen air rushed into the room, he closed it again immediately. He looked into the garden with that absorbed look which studies rather than sees. The garden was enclosed with a white wall, quite low, and readily scaled. Beyond, against the sky, he distinguished the tops of trees at equal distances apart, which showed that this wall separated the garden from an avenue or a lane planted with trees.

When he had taken this observation, he turned like a man whose mind is made up, went to his alcove, took his haversack, opened it, fumbled in it, took out something which he laid upon the bed, put his shoes into one of his pockets, tied up his bundle, swung it upon his shoulders, put on his cap, and pulled the vizor down over his eyes, felt for his stick, and went and put it in the corner of the window, then returned to the bed, and resolutely took up the object which he had laid on it. It looked like a short iron bar, pointed at one end like a spear.

It would have been hard to distinguish in the darkness for what use this piece of iron had been made. Could it be a lever? Could it be a club?

In the day-time, it would have been seen to be nothing but a miner's drill. At that time, the convicts were sometimes employed in quarrying stone on the high hills that surround Toulon, and they often had miners' tools in their possession. Miners' drills are of solid iron, terminating at the lower end in a point, by means of which they are sunk into the rock.

He took the drill in his right hand, and holding his breath, with stealthy steps, he moved towards the door of the next room, which was the bishop's, as we know. On reaching the door, he found it unlatched. The bishop had not closed it.

WHAT HE DOES

Jean Valjean listened. Not a sound.

He pushed the door.

He pushed it lightly with the end of his finger, with the stealthy and timorous carefulness of a cat. The door yielded to the pressure with a silent, imperceptible movement, which made the opening a little wider.

He waited a moment, and then pushed the door again more boldly.

It yielded gradually and silently. The opening was now wide enough for him to pass through; but there was a small table near the door which with it formed a troublesome angle, and which barred the entrance.

Jean Valjean saw the obstacle. At all hazards the opening must be made still wider.

He so determined, and pushed the door a third time, harder than before. This time a rusty hinge suddenly sent out into the darkness a harsh and prolonged creak.

Jean Valjean shivered. The noise of this hinge sounded in his ears as clear and terrible as the trumpet of the Judgment Day.

In the fantastic exaggeration of the first moment, he almost imagined that this hinge had become animate, and suddenly endowed with a terrible life; and that it was barking like a dog to warn everybody, and rouse the sleepers.

He stopped, shuddering and distracted, and dropped from his tiptoes to his feet. He felt the pulses of his temples beat like trip-hammers, and it appeared to him that his breath came from his chest with the roar of wind from a cavern. It seemed impossible that the horrible sound of this incensed hinge had not shaken the whole house with the shock of an earthquake: the door pushed by him had taken the alarm, and had called out; the old man would arise; the two old women would scream; help would come; in a quarter of an hour the town would be alive with it, and the gendarmes in pursuit. For a moment he thought he was lost.

He stood still, petrified like the pillar of salt, not daring to stir. Some minutes passed. The door was wide open; he ventured a look into the room. Nothing had moved. He listened. Nothing was stirring in the house. The noise of the rusty hinge had wakened nobody.

This first danger was over, but still he felt within him a frightful tumult. Nevertheless he did not flinch. Not even when he thought he was lost had he flinched. His only thought was to make an end of it quickly. He took one step and was in the room.

A deep calm filled the chamber. Here and there indistinct, confused forms could be distinguished; which by day, were papers scattered over a table, open folios, books piled on a stool, an arm-chair with clothes on it, a *prie-dieu,* but now were only dark corners and whitish spots. Jean Valjean advanced, carefully avoiding the furniture. At the further end of the room he could hear the equal and quiet breathing of the sleeping bishop.

Suddenly he stopped: he was near the bed, he had reached it sooner than he thought.

Nature sometimes joins her effects and her appearances to our acts with a sort of serious and intelligent appropriateness, as if she would compel us to reflect. For nearly a half hour a great cloud had darkened the sky. At the moment when Jean Valjean paused before the bed the cloud broke as if purposely, and a ray of moonlight crossing the high window, suddenly lighted up the bishop's pale face. He slept tranquilly. He was almost entirely dressed, though in bed, on account of the cold nights of the lower Alps, with a dark woollen garment which covered his arms to the wrists. His head had fallen on the pillow in the unstudied attitude of slumber; over the side of the bed hung his hand, ornamented with the pastoral ring, and which had done so many good deeds, so many pious acts. His entire countenance was lit up with a vague expression of content, hope, and happiness. It was more than a smile and almost a radiance. On his forehead rested the indescribable reflection of an unseen light. The souls of the upright in sleep have vision of a mysterious heaven.

A reflection from this heaven shone upon the bishop.

But it was also a luminous transparency, for this heaven was within him; this heaven was his conscience.

At the instant when the moonbeam overlay, so to speak, this inward radiance, the sleeping bishop appeared as if in a halo. But it was very mild, and veiled in an ineffable twilight. The moon in the sky, nature drowsing, the garden without a pulse, the quiet house, the hour, the moment, the silence, added something strangely solemn and unutterable to the venerable repose of this man, and enveloped his white locks and his closed eyes with a serene and majestic glory, this face where all was hope and confidence—this old man's head and infant's slumber.

There was something of divinity almost in this man, thus unconsciously august.

Jean Valjean was in the shadow with the iron drill in his hand, erect, motionless, terrified, at this radiant figure. He had never seen anything comparable to it. This confidence filled him with fear. The moral world has no greater spectacle than this; a troubled and restless conscience on the verge of committing an evil deed, contemplating the sleep of a good man.

He did not remove his eyes from the old man. The only thing which was plain from his attitude and his countenance was a strange indecision. You would have said he was hesitating between two realms, that of the doomed and that of the saved. He appeared ready either to cleave this skull, or to kiss this hand.

In a few moments he raised his left hand slowly to his forehead and took off his hat; then, letting his hand fall with the same slowness, Jean Valjean resumed his contemplations, his cap in his left hand, his club in his right, and his hair bristling on his fierce-looking head.

Under this frightful gaze the bishop still slept in profoundest peace.

The crucifix above the mantelpiece was dimly visible in the moonlight, apparently extending its arms towards both, with a benediction for one and a pardon for the other.

Suddenly Jean Valjean put on his cap, then passed quickly, without looking at the bishop, along the bed, straight to the cupboard which he perceived near its head; he raised the drill to force the lock; the key was in it; he opened it; the first thing he saw was the basket of silver, he took it, crossed the room with hasty stride, careless of noise, reached the door, entered the oratory, took his stick, stepped out, put the silver in his knapsack, threw away the basket, ran across the garden, leaped over the wall like a tiger, and fled.

THE BISHOP AT WORK

The next day at sunrise, Monseigneur Bienvenu was walking in the garden. Madame Magloire ran towards him quite beside herself.

"Monseigneur, monseigneur," cried she, "does your greatness know where the silver basket is?"

"Yes," said the bishop.

"God be praised!" said she, "I did not know what had become of it."

The bishop had just found the basket on a flower-bed. He gave it to Madame Magloire and said: "There it is."

"Yes," said she, "but there is nothing in it. The silver?"

"Ah!" said the bishop, "it is the silver then that troubles you. I do not know where that is."

"Good heavens! it is stolen. That man who came last night stole it."

And in the twinkling of an eye, with all the agility of which her age was capable, Madame Magloire ran to the oratory, went into the alcove, and came back to the bishop. The bishop was bending with some sadness over a cochlearia des Guillons, which the basket had broken in falling. He looked up at Madame Magloire's cry:

"Monseigneur, the man has gone! the silver is stolen!"

While she was uttering this exclamation her eyes fell on an angle of the garden where she saw traces of an escalade. A capstone of the wall had been thrown down.

"See, there is where he got out; he jumped into Cochefilet lane. The abominable fellow! he has stolen our silver!"

The bishop was silent for a moment, then raising his serious eyes, he said mildly to Madame Magloire:

"Now first, did this silver belong to us?"

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Madame Magloire did not answer; after a moment the bishop continued:

"Madame Magloire, I have for a long time wrongfully withheld this silver; it belonged to the poor. Who was this man? A poor man evidently."

"Alas! alas!" returned Madame Magloire. "It is not on my account or mademoiselle's; it is all the same to us. But it is on yours, monseigneur. What is monsieur going to eat from now?"

The bishop looked at her with amazement:

"How so! have we no tin plates?"

Madame Magloire shrugged her shoulders.

"Tin smells."

"Well, then, iron plates."

Madame Magloire made an expressive gesture.

"Iron tastes."

"Well," said the bishop, "then, wooden plates."

In a few minutes he was breakfasting at the same table at which Jean Valjean sat the night before. While breakfasting, Monseigneur Bienvenu pleasantly remarked to his sister who said nothing, and Madame Magloire who was grumbling to herself, that there was really no need even of a wooden spoon or fork to dip a piece of bread into a cup of milk.

"Was there ever such an idea?" said Madame Magloire to herself, as she went backwards and forwards: "to take in a man like that, and to give him a bed beside him; and yet what a blessing it was that he did nothing but steal! Oh, my stars! it makes the chills run over me when I think of it!"

Just as the brother and sister were rising from the table, there was a knock at the door.

"Come in," said the bishop.

The door opened. A strange, fierce group appeared on the threshold. Three men were holding a fourth by the collar. The three men were gendarmes; the fourth Jean Valjean.

A brigadier of gendarmes, who appeared to head the group, was near the door. He advanced towards the bishop, giving a military salute.

"Monseigneur," said he—

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A STRANGE, FIERCE GROUP APPEARED ON THE THRESHOLD

At this word Jean Valjean, who was sullen and seemed entirely cast down, raised his head with a stupefied air—

"Monseigneur!' he murmured, "then it is not the curé!"

"Silence!" said a gendarme, "it is monseigneur, the bishop."

In the meantime Monsieur Bienvenu had approached as quickly as his great age permitted:

"Ah, there you are!" said he, looking towards Jean Valjean, "I am glad to see you. But! I gave you the candlesticks also, which are silver like the rest, and would bring two hundred francs. Why did you not take them along with your plates?"

Jean Valjean opened his eyes and looked at the bishop with an expression which no human tongue could describe.

"Monseigneur," said the brigadier, "then what this man said was true? We met him. He was going like a man who was running away, and we arrested him in order to see. He had this silver."

"And he told you," interrupted the bishop, with a smile, "that it had been given him by a good old priest with whom he had passed the night. I see it all. And you brought him back here? It is all a mistake."

"If that is so," said the brigadier, "we can let him go."

"Certainly," replied the bishop.

The gendarmes released Jean Valjean, who shrank back—

"Is it true that they let me go?" he said in a voice almost inarticulate, as if he were speaking in his sleep.

"Yes! you can go. Do you not understand?" said a gendarme.

"My friend," said the bishop, "before you go away, here are your candlesticks; take them."

He went to the mantelpiece, took the two candlesticks, and brought them to Jean Valjean. The two women beheld the action without a word, or gesture, or look, that might disturb the bishop.

Jean Valjean was trembling in every limb. He took the two candlesticks mechanically, and with a wild appearance.

"Now," said the Bishop, "go in peace. By the way, my friend, when you come again, you need not come through the garden. You can always come in and go out by the front door. It is closed only with a latch, day or night."

Then turning to the gendarmes, he said:

"Messieurs, you can retire." The gendarmes withdrew.

Jean Valjean felt like a man who is just about to faint.

The bishop approached him, and said, in a low voice:

"Forget not, never forget that you have promised me to use this silver to become an honest man."

Jean Valjean, who had no recollection of this promise, stood confounded. The bishop had laid much stress upon these words as he uttered them. He continued, solemnly:

"Jean Valjean, my brother: you belong no longer to evil, but to good. It is your soul that I am buying for you. I withdraw it from dark thoughts and from the spirit of perdition, and I give it to God!"

PETIT GERVAIS

Jean Valjean went out of the city as if he were escaping. He made all haste to get into the open country, taking the first lanes and bypaths that offered, without noticing that he was every moment retracing his steps. He wandered thus all the morning. He had eaten nothing, but he felt no hunger. He was the prey of a multitude of new sensations. He felt somewhat angry, he knew not against whom. He could not have told whether he were touched or humiliated. There came over him, at times, a strange relenting which he struggled with, and to which he opposed the hardening of his past twenty years. This condition wearied him. He saw, with disquietude, shaken within him that species of frightful calm which the injustice of his fate had given him. He asked himself what should replace it. At times he would really have liked better to be in prison with the gendarmes, and that things had not happened thus; that would have given him less agitation. Although the season was well advanced, there were yet here and there a few late flowers in the hedges, the odour of which, as it met him in his walk, recalled the memories of his childhood. These memories were almost insupportable, it was so long since they had occurred to him.

Unspeakable thoughts thus gathered in his mind the whole day.

As the sun was sinking towards the horizon, lengthening the shadow on the ground of the smallest pebble, Jean Valjean was seated behind a thicket in a large reddish plain, an absolute desert. There was no horizon but the Alps. Not even the steeple of a village church. Jean Valjean might have been three leagues from D——. A by-path which crossed the plain passed a few steps from the thicket.

In the midst of this meditation, which would have heightened not a little the frightful effect of his rags to any one who might have met him, he heard a joyous sound.

He turned his head, and saw coming along the path a little Savoyard, a dozen years old, singing, with his hurdygurdy at his side, and his marmot box on his back.

One of those pleasant and gay youngsters who go from place to place, with their knees sticking through their trousers.

Always singing, the boy stopped from time to time, and played at tossing up some pieces of money that he had in his hand, probably his whole fortune. Among them there was one forty-sous piece.

The boy stopped by the side of the thicket without seeing Jean Valjean, and tossed up his handful of sous; until this time he had skilfully caught the whole of them upon the back of his hand.

This time the forty-sous piece escaped him, and rolled towards the thicket, near Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean put his foot upon it.

The boy, however, had followed the piece with his eye, and had seen where it went.

He was not frightened, and walked straight to the man.

It was an entirely solitary place. Far as the eye could reach there was no one on the plain or in the path. Nothing could be heard, but the faint cries of a flock of birds of passage, that were flying across the sky at an immense height. The child turned his back to the sun, which made his hair like threads of gold, and flushed the savage face of Jean Valjean with a lurid glow.

"Monsieur," said the little Savoyard, with that childish confidence which is made up of ignorance and innocence, "my piece?"

"What is your name?" said Valjean.

"Petit Gervais, monsieur."

"Get out," said Jean Valjean.

"Monsieur," continued the boy, "give me my piece."

Jean Valjean dropped his head and did not answer.

The child began again:

"My piece, monsieur!"

Jean Valjean's eye remained fixed on the ground.

"My piece!" exclaimed the boy, "my white piece! my silver!"

Jean Valjean did not appear to understand. The boy took him by the collar of his blouse and shook him. And at the same time he made an effort to move the big, iron-soled shoe which was placed upon his treasure.

"I want my piece! my forty-sous piece!"

The child began to cry. Jean Valjean raised his head. He still kept his seat. His look was troubled. He looked upon the boy with an air of wonder, then reached out his hand towards his stick, and exclaimed in a terrible voice: "Who is there?"

"Me, monsieur," answered the boy. "Petit Gervais! me! me! give me my forty sous, if you please! Take away your foot, monsieur, if you please!" Then becoming angry, small as he was, and almost threatening:

"Come, now, will you take away your foot? Why don't you take away your foot?"

"Ah! you here yet!" said Jean Valjean, and rising hastily to his feet, without releasing the piece of money, he added: "You'd better take care of yourself!"

The boy looked at him in terror, then began to tremble from head to foot, and after a few seconds of stupor, took to flight and ran with all his might without daring to turn his head or to utter a cry.

At a little distance, however, he stopped for want of breath, and Jean Valjean in his reverie heard him sobbing.

In a few minutes the boy was gone.

The sun had gone down.

The shadows were deepening around Jean Valjean. He had not eaten during the day; probably he had some fever.

He had remained standing, and had not changed his attitude since the child fled. His breathing was at long and unequal intervals. His eyes were fixed on a spot ten or twelve steps before him, and seemed to be studying with profound attention the form of an old piece of blue crockery that was lying in the grass. All at once he shivered; he began to feel the cold night air.

He pulled his cap down over his forehead, sought mechanically to fold and button his blouse around him, stepped forward and stooped to pick up his stick.

At that instant he perceived the forty-sous piece which his foot had half buried in the ground, and which glistened among the pebbles. It was like an electric shock. "What is that?" said he, between his teeth. He drew back a step or two, then stopped without the power to withdraw his gaze from this point which his foot had covered the instant before, as if the thing that glistened there in the obscurity had been an open eye fixed upon him.

After a few minutes, he sprang convulsively towards the piece of money, seized it, and, rising, looked away over the plain, straining his eyes towards all points of the horizon, standing and trembling like a frightened deer which is seeking a place of refuge.

He saw nothing. Night was falling, the plain was cold and bare, thick purple mists were rising in the glimmering twilight.

He said: "Oh!" and began to walk rapidly in the direction in which the child had gone. After some thirty steps, he stopped, looked about, and saw nothing.

Then he called with all his might "Petit Gervais! Petit Gervais!"

And then he listened.

There was no answer.

The country was desolate and gloomy. On all sides was space. There was nothing about him but a shadow in which his gaze was lost, and a silence in which his voice was lost.

A biting norther was blowing, which gave a kind of dismal life to everything about him. The bushes shook their little thin arms with an incredible fury. One would have said that they were threatening and pursuing somebody.

He began to walk again, then quickened his pace to a run, and from time to time stopped and called out in that solitude, in a most desolate and terrible voice:

"Petit Gervais! Petit Gervais!"

Surely, if the child had heard him, he would have been frightened, and would have hid himself. But doubtless the boy was already far away.

He met a priest on horseback. He went up to him and said:

"Monsieur curé, have you seen a child go by?"

"No," said the priest.

"Petit Gervais was his name?"

"I have seen nobody."

He took two five-franc pieces from his bag, and gave them to the priest.

"Monsieur curé, this is for your poor. Monsieur curé, he is a little fellow, about ten years old, with a marmot, I think, and a hurdygurdy. He went this way. One of these Savoyards, you know?"

"I have not seen him."

"Petit Gervais? is his village near here? can you tell me?"

"If it be as you say, my friend, the little fellow is a foreigner. They roam about this country. Nobody knows them."

Jean Valjean hastily took out two more five-franc pieces, and gave them to the priest.

"For your poor," said he.

Then he added wildly:

"Monsieur abbé, have me arrested. I am a robber."

The priest put spurs to his horse, and fled in great fear.

Jean Valjean began to run again in the direction which he had first taken.

BOOK II—TO ENTRUST IS SOMETIMES TO ABANDON

ONE MOTHER MEETS ANOTHER

There was, during the first quarter of the present century, at Montfermeil, near Paris, a sort of chop-house: it is not there now. It was kept by a man and his wife, named Thenardier, and was situated in the Lane Boulanger. Above the door, nailed flat against the wall, was a board, upon which something was painted that looked like a man carrying on his back another man wearing the heavy epaulettes of a general, gilt and with large silver stars; red blotches typified blood; the remainder of the picture was smoke, and probably represented a battle. Beneath was this inscription: To the Sergeant of Waterloo.

Nothing is commoner than a cart or wagon before the door of an inn; nevertheless the vehicle, or more properly speaking, the fragment of a vehicle which obstructed the street in front of the Sergeant of Waterloo one evening in the spring of 1815, certainly would have attracted by its bulk the attention of any painter who might have been passing.

It was the fore-carriage of one of those drays for carrying heavy articles, used in wooded countries for transporting joists and trunks of trees: it consisted of a massive iron axle-tree with a pivot to which a heavy pole was attached, and which was supported by two enormous wheels. As a whole, it was squat, crushing, and misshapen: it might have been fancied a gigantic gun-carriage.

The roads had covered the wheels, felloes, limbs, axle, and the pole with a coating of hideous yellow-hued mud, similar in tint to that with which cathedrals are sometimes decorated. The wood had disappeared beneath mud; and the iron beneath rust.

Under the axle-tree hung festooned a huge chain fit for a Goliath of the galleys.

The middle of the chain was hanging quite near the ground, under the axle; and upon the bend, as on a swinging rope, two little girls were seated that evening in exquisite grouping, the smaller, eighteen months old, in the lap of the larger, who was two years and a half old.

A handkerchief carefully knotted kept them from falling. A mother, looking upon this frightful chain, had said: "Ah! there is a plaything for my children!"

The radiant children, picturesquely and tastefully decked, might be fancied two roses twining the rusty iron, with their triumphantly sparkling eyes, and their blooming, laughing faces. One was a rosy blonde, the other a brunette; their artless faces were two ravishing surprises; the perfume that was shed upon the air by a flowering shrub near by seemed their own out-breathings; the smaller one was showing her pretty little body with the chaste indecency of babyhood. Above and around these delicate heads, moulded in happiness and bathed in light, the gigantic carriage, black with rust and almost frightful with its entangled curves and abrupt angles, arched like the mouth of a cavern.

The mother, a woman whose appearance was rather forbidding, but touching at this moment, was seated on the sill of the inn, swinging the two children by a long string, while she brooded them with her eyes for fear of accident with that animal but heavenly expression peculiar to maternity. At each vibration the hideous links uttered a creaking noise like an angry cry; the little ones were in ecstasies, the setting sun mingled in the joy, and nothing could be more charming than this caprice of chance which made of a Titan's chain a swing for cherubim.

While rocking the babes the mother sang with a voice out of tune a then popular song:

"Il le faut, disait un guerrier."

Her song and watching her children prevented her hearing and seeing what was passing in the street.

Some one, however, had approached her as she was beginning the first couplet of the song, and suddenly she heard a voice say quite near her ear:

"You have two pretty children there, madame."

"A la belle et tendre Imogine,"

answered the mother, continuing her song; then she turned her head.

A woman was before her at a little distance; she also had a child, which she bore in her arms.

She was carrying in addition a large carpet-bag, which seemed heavy.

This woman's child was one of the divinest beings that can be imagined: a little girl of two or three years. She might have entered the lists with the other little ones for coquetry of attire; she wore a head-dress of fine linen; ribbons at her shoulders and Valenciennes lace on her cap. The folds of her skirt were raised enough to show her plump fine white leg: she was charmingly rosy and healthful. The pretty little creature gave one a desire to bite her cherry cheeks. We can say nothing of her eyes except that they must have been very large, and were fringed with superb lashes. She was asleep.

She was sleeping in the absolutely confiding slumber peculiar to her age. Mothers' arms are made of tenderness, and sweet sleep blesses the child who lies therein.

As to the mother, she seemed poor and sad; she had the appearance of a working woman who is seeking to return to the life of a peasant. She was young,—and pretty? It was possible, but in that garb beauty could not be displayed. Her hair, one blonde mesh of which had fallen, seemed very thick, but it was severely fastened up beneath an ugly, close, narrow nun's head-dress, tied under the chin. Laughing shows fine teeth when one has them, but she did not laugh. Her eyes seemed not to have been tearless for a long time. She was pale, and looked very weary, and somewhat sick. She gazed upon her child, sleeping in her arms, with that peculiar look which only a mother possesses who nurses her own child. Her form was clumsily masked by a large blue handkerchief folded across her bosom. Her hands were tanned and spotted with freckles, the forefinger hardened and pricked with the needle; she wore a coarse brown delaine mantle, a calico dress, and large heavy shoes. Her name was Fantine.

"You have two pretty children there, madame."

The most ferocious animals are disarmed by caresses to their young.

The mother raised her head and thanked her, and made the stranger sit down on the stone step, she herself being on the doorsill: the two women began to talk together.

"My name is Madame Thenardier," said the mother of the two girls: "we keep this inn."

Then going on with her song, she sang between her teeth:

"Il le faut, je suis chevalier,
Et je pars pour la Palestine."

This Madame Thenardier was a red-haired, brawny, angular woman, of the soldier's wife type in all its horror, and, singularly enough, she had a lolling air which she had gained from novel-reading. She was still young, scarcely thirty years old. If this woman, who was seated stooping, had been upright, perhaps her towering form and her broad shoulders, those of a movable colossus, fit for a market-woman, would have dismayed the traveller, disturbed her confidence, and prevented what we have to relate. A person seated instead of standing; fate hangs on such a thread as that.

The traveller told her story, a little modified.

She said she was a working woman, and her husband was dead. Not being able to procure work in Paris she was going in search of it elsewhere; in her own province; that she had left Paris that morning on foot; that carrying her child she had become tired, and meeting the Villemomble stage had got in; that from Villemomble she had come on foot to Montfermeil; that the child had walked a little, but not much, she was so young; that she was compelled to carry her, and the jewel had fallen asleep.

And at these words she gave her daughter a passionate kiss, which wakened her. The child opened its large blue eyes, like its mother's, and saw—what? Nothing, everything, with that serious and sometimes severe air of little children, which is one of the mysteries of their shining innocence before our shadowy virtues. One would say that they felt themselves to be angels, and knew us to be human. Then the child began to laugh, and, although the mother restrained her, slipped to the ground, with the indomitable energy of a little one that wants to run about. All at once she perceived the two others in their swing, stopped short, and put out her tongue in token of admiration.

Mother Thenardier untied the children and took them from the swing, saying:

"Play together, all three of you."

At that age acquaintance is easy, and in a moment the little Thenardiers were playing with the new-comer, making holes in the ground to their intense delight.

This new-comer was very sprightly: the goodness of the mother is written in the gaiety of the child; she had taken a splinter of wood, which she used as a spade, and was stoutly digging a hole fit for a fly.

The two women continued to chat.

"What do you call your child?"

"Cosette."

For Cosette read Euphrasie. The name of the little one was Euphrasie. But the mother had made Cosette out of it, by that sweet and charming instinct of mothers and of the people, who change Jósefa into Pepita, and Françoise into Sillette. That is a kind of derivation which deranges and disconcerts all the science of etymologists. We knew a grandmother who succeeded in making from Theodore, Gnon.

"She is going on three years."

"The age of my oldest."

The three girls were grouped in an attitude of deep anxiety and bliss; a great event had occurred; a large worm had come out of the ground; they were afraid of it, and yet in ecstasies over it.

Their bright foreheads touched each other: three heads in one halo of glory.

"Children," exclaimed the Thenardier mother; "how soon they know one another. See them! One would swear they were three sisters."

These words were the spark which the other mother was probably awaiting. She seized the hand of Madame Thenardier and said:

"Will you keep my child for me?"

Madame Thenardier made a motion of surprise, which was neither consent nor refusal.

Cosette's mother continued:

"You see I cannot take my child into the country. Work forbids it. With a child I could not find a place there; they are so absurd in that district. It is God who has led me before your inn. The sight of your little ones, so pretty, and clean, and happy, has overwhelmed me. I said: there is a good mother; they will be like three sisters, and then it will not be long before I come back. Will you keep my child for me?"

"I must think over it," said Thenardier.

"I will give six francs a month."

Here a man's voice was heard from within:

"Not less than seven francs, and six months paid in advance."

"Six times seven are forty-two," said Thenardier.

"I will give it," said the mother.

"And fifteen francs extra for the first expenses," added the man.

"That's fifty-seven francs," said Madame Thenardier, and in the midst of her reckoning she sang indistinctly:

"Il le faut, disait un guerrier."

"I will give it," said the mother; "I have eighty francs. That will leave me enough to go into the country if I walk. I will earn some money there, and as soon as I have I will come for my little love."

The man's voice returned:

"Has the child a wardrobe?"

"That is my husband," said Thenardier.

"Certainly she has, the poor darling. I knew it was your husband. And a fine wardrobe it is too, an extravagant wardrobe, everything in dozens, and silk dresses like a lady. They are there in my carpet-bag."

"You must leave that here," put in the man's voice.

"Of course I shall give it to you," said the mother; "it would be strange if I should leave my child naked."

The face of the master appeared.

"It is all right," said he.

The bargain was concluded. The mother passed the night at the inn, gave her money and left her child, fastened again her carpet-bag, diminished by her child's wardrobe, and very light now, and set off next morning, expecting soon to return. These partings are arranged tranquilly, but they are full of despair.

A neighbour of the Thenardiers met this mother on her way, and came in, saying:

"I have just met a woman in the street, who was crying as if her heart would break."

When Cosette's mother had gone, the man said to his wife:

"That will do me for my note of 110 francs which falls due to-morrow; I was fifty francs short. Do you know I should have had a sheriff and a protest? You have proved a good mousetrap with your little ones."

"Without knowing it," said the woman.

THE LARK

To be wicked does not insure prosperity—for the inn did not succeed well.

Thanks to Fantine's fifty-seven francs, Thenardier had been able to avoid a protest and to honour his signature. The next month they were still in need of money, and the woman carried Cosette's wardrobe to Paris and pawned it for sixty francs. When this sum was spent, the Thenardiers began to look upon the little girl as a child which they sheltered for charity, and treated her as such. Her clothes being gone, they dressed her in the cast-off garments of the little Thenardiers, that is in rags. They fed her on the orts and ends, a little better than the dog, and a little worse than the cat. The dog and cat were her messmates. Cosette ate with them under the table in a wooden dish like theirs.

Her mother, as we shall see hereafter, who found a place at M——

sur M—— wrote, or rather had some one write for her, every month, inquiring news of her child. The Thenardiers replied invariably:

"Cosette is doing wonderfully well."

The six months passed away: the mother sent seven francs for the seventh month, and continued to send this sum regularly month after month. The year was not ended before Thenardier said: "A pretty price that is. What does she expect us to do for her seven francs?" And he wrote demanding twelve francs. The mother, whom he persuaded that her child was happy and doing well, assented, and forwarded the twelve francs.

There are certain natures which cannot have love on one side without hatred on the other. This Thenardier mother passionately loved her own little ones: this made her detest the young stranger. It is sad to think that a mother's love can have such a dark side. Little as was the place Cosette occupied in the house, it seemed to her that this little was taken from her children, and that the little one lessened the air hers breathed. This woman, like many women of her kind, had a certain amount of caresses, and blows, and hard words to dispense each day. If she had not had Cosette, it is certain that her daughters idolised as they were, would have received all, but the little stranger did them the service to attract the blows to herself; her children had only the caresses. Cosette could not stir that she did not draw down upon herself a hailstorm of undeserved and severe chastisements. A weak, soft little one who knew nothing of this world, or of God, continually ill-treated, scolded, punished, beaten, she saw beside her two other young things like herself, who lived in a halo of glory!

The woman was unkind to Cosette, Eponine and Azelma were unkind also. Children at that age are only copies of the mother; the size is reduced, that is all.

A year passed and then another.

People used to say in the village:

"What good people these Thenardiers are! They are not rich, and yet they bring up a poor child, that has been left with them."

They thought Cosette was forgotten by her mother.

Meantime Thenardier, demanded fifteen francs a month, saying "that the 'creature' was growing and eating," and threatening to send her away. The mother paid the fifteen francs.

From year to year the child grew, and her misery also.

So long as Cosette was very small, she was the scapegoat of the two other children; as soon as she began to grow a little, that is to say, before she was five years old, she became the servant of the house.

Cosette was made to run of errands, sweep the rooms, the yard, the street, wash the dishes, and even carry burdens. The Thenardiers felt doubly authorised to treat her thus, as the mother, who still remained at M——sur M——, began to be remiss in her payments. Some months remained due.

Had this mother returned to Montfermeil, at the end of these three years, she would not have known her child. Cosette, so fresh and pretty when she came to that house, was now thin and wan. She had a peculiar restless air. Sly! said the Thenardiers.

Injustice had made her sullen, and misery had made her ugly. Her fine eyes only remained to her, and they were painful to look at, for, large as they were, they seemed to increase the sadness:

It was a harrowing sight to see in the winter time the poor child, not yet six years old, shivering under the tatters of what was once a calico dress, sweeping the street before daylight with an enormous broom in her little red hands and tears in her large eyes.

In the place she was called the Lark. People like figurative names and were pleased thus to name this little being, not larger than a bird, trembling, frightened, and shivering, awake every morning first of all in the house and the village, always in the street or in the fields before dawn.

Only the poor lark never sang.

BOOK III—THE DESCENT

HISTORY OF AN IMPROVEMENT IN JET-WORK

WHAT had become of this mother, in the meanwhile, who, according to the people of Montfermeil, seemed, to have abandoned her child? where was she? what was she doing?

After leaving her little Cosette with the Thenardiers, she went on her way and arrived at M——sur M——.

This, it will be remembered, was in 1818.

Within about two years there had been accomplished there one of those industrial changes which are the great events of small communities.

This circumstance is important and we think it well to relate it, we might even say to italicise it.

From time immemorial the special occupation of the inhabitants of M—— sur M—— had been the imitation of English jets and German black glass trinkets. The business had always been dull in consequence of the high price of the raw material, which reacted upon the manufacture. At the time of Fantine's return to M—— sur M—— an entire transformation had been effected in the production of these 'black goods.' Towards the end of the year 1815, an unknown man established himself in the city, and had conceived the idea of substituting gum-lac for resin in the manufacture; and for bracelets, in particular, he made the clasps by simply bending the ends of the metal together instead of soldering them.

This very slight change had worked a revolution.

This very slight change had in fact reduced the price of the raw material enormously, and this had rendered it possible, first, to raise the wages of the labourer—a benefit to the country—secondly, to improve the quality of the goods—an advantage for the consumer—and thirdly, to sell them at a lower price even while making three times the profit—a gain for the manufacturer.

Thus we have three results from one idea.

In less than three years the inventor of this process had become rich, which was well, and had made all around him rich, which was better. He was a stranger in the Department. Nothing was known of his birth, and but little of his early history.

The story went that he came to the city with very little money, a few hundred francs at most.

From this slender capital, under the inspiration of an ingenious idea, made fruitful by order and care, he had drawn a fortune for himself, and a fortune for the whole region.

On his arrival at M—— sur M—— he had the dress, the manners, and the language of a labourer only.

It seems that the very day on which he thus obscurely entered the little city of M—— sur M——, just at dusk on a December evening, with his bundle on his back, and a thorn stick in his hand, a great fire had broken out in the town-house. This man rushed into the fire, and saved, at the peril of his life, two children, who proved to be those of the captain of the gendarmerie, and in the hurry and gratitude of the moment no one thought to ask him for his passport. He was known from that time by the name of Father Madeleine.

MADELEINE

He was a man of about fifty, who always appeared to be preoccupied in mind, and who was good-natured; this was all that could be said about him.

Thanks to the rapid progress of this manufacture, to which he had given such wonderful life, M—— sur M—— had become a considerable centre of business. Immense purchases were made there every year for the Spanish markets, where there is a large demand for jet work, and M—— sur M——, in this branch of trade, almost competed with London and Berlin. The profits of Father Madeleine were so great that by the end of the second year he was able to build a large factory, in which there were two immense workshops, one for men and the other for women: whoever was needy could go there and be sure of finding work and wages. Father Madeleine required the men to be willing, the women to be of good morals, and all to be honest.

At length, in 1819, it was reported in the city one morning, that upon the recommendation of the prefect, and in consideration of the services he had rendered to the country, Father Madeleine had been appointed by the king, Mayor of M—— sur M——. Those who had pronounced the new-comer "an ambitious man," eagerly seized this opportunity, which all men desire, to exclaim:

"There! what did I tell you?"

M—— sur M—— was filled with the rumour, and the report proved to be well founded, for, a few days afterwards, the nomination appeared in the *Moniteur.* The next day Father Madeleine declined.

In 1820, five years after his arrival at M—— sur M——, the services that he had rendered to the region were so brilliant and the wish of the whole population was so unanimous, that the king again appointed him mayor of the city. He refused again; but the prefect resisted his determination, the principal citizens came and urged him to accept, and the people in the streets begged him to do so; all insisted so strongly that at last he yielded. It was remarked that what appeared most of all to bring him to this determination, was the almost angry exclamation of an old woman belonging to the poorer class, who cried out to him from her door-stone, with some temper:

"A good mayor is a good thing. Are you afraid of the good you can do?"

VAGUE FLASHES IN THE HORIZON

Little by little in the lapse of time all opposition had ceased. At first there had been, as always happens with those who rise by their own efforts, slanders and calumnies against Monsieur Madeleine, soon this was reduced to satire, then it was only wit, then it vanished entirely; respect became complete, unanimous, cordial, and there came a moment, about 1821, when the words Monsieur the Mayor were pronounced at M—— sur M—— with almost the same accent as the words Monseigneur the Bishop at D—— in 1815. People came from thirty miles around to consult Monsieur Madeleine. He settled differences, he prevented lawsuits, he reconciled enemies. Everybody, of his own will, chose him for judge. He seemed to have the book of the natural law by heart. A contagion of veneration had, in the course of six or seven years, step by step, spread over the whole country.

Often, when Monsieur Madeleine passed along the street, calm, affectionate, followed by the benedictions of all, it happened that a tall man, wearing a flat hat and an iron-grey coat, and armed with a stout cane, would turn around abruptly behind him, and follow him with his eyes until he disappeared, crossing his arms, slowly shaking his head, and pushing his upper with his under lip up to his nose, a sort of significant grimace which might be rendered by: "But what is that man? I am sure I have seen him somewhere. At all events, I at least am not his dupe."

This personage, grave with an almost threatening gravity, was one of those who, even in a hurried interview, command the attention of the observer.

His name was Javert, and he was one of the police.

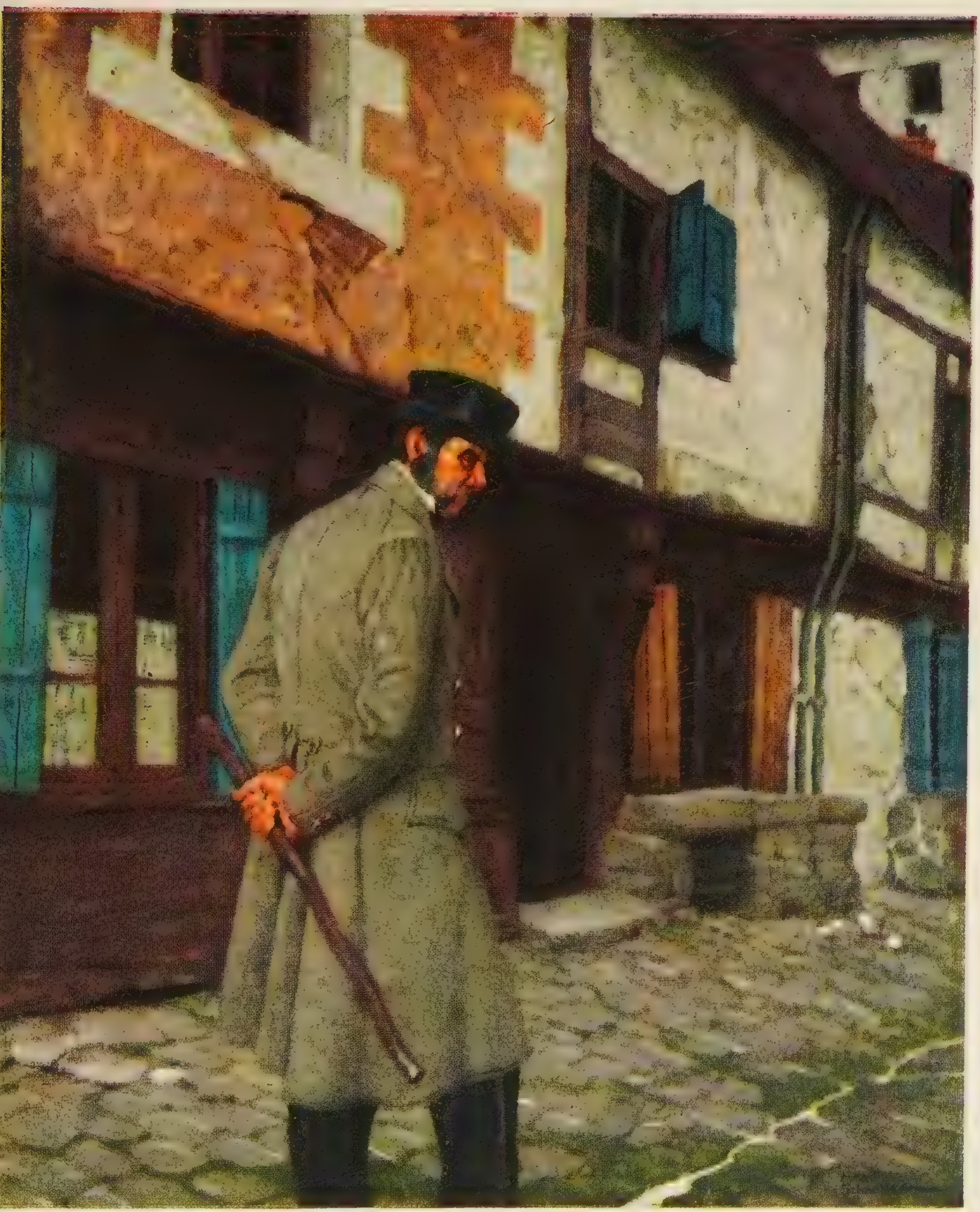
He exercised at M—— sur M—— the unpleasant, but useful, function of inspector. He was not there at the date of Madeleine's arrival. Javert owed his position to the protection of Monsieur Chabouillet, the secretary of the Minister of State, Count Anglès, then prefect of police at Paris. When Javert arrived at M—— sur M—— the fortune of the great manufacturer had been made already, and Father Madeleine had become Monsieur Madeleine.

The human face of Javert consisted of a snub nose, with two deep nostrils, which were bordered by large bushy whiskers that covered both his cheeks. One felt ill at ease the first time he saw those two forests and those two caverns. When Javert laughed, which was rarely and terribly, his thin lips parted, and showed, not only his teeth, but his gums; and around his nose there was a wrinkle as broad and wild as the muzzle of a fallow deer. Javert, when serious, was a bull-dog; when he laughed, he was a tiger. For the rest, a small head, large jaws, hair hiding the forehead and falling over the eyebrows, between the eyes a permanent central frown, a gloomy look, a mouth pinched and frightful, and an air of fierce command.

Such was this formidable man.

Javert was like an eye always fixed on Monsieur Madeleine; an eye full of suspicion and conjecture. Monsieur Madeleine finally noticed it, but seemed to consider it of no consequence. He asked no question of Javert, he neither sought him nor shunned him, he endured this unpleasant and annoying stare without appearing to pay any attention to it. He treated Javert as he did everybody else, at ease and with kindness.

From some words that Javert had dropped, it was guessed that he had secretly hunted up, with that curiosity which belongs to his race, and which is more a matter of instinct than of will, all the traces of his previous life which Father Madeleine had left elsewhere. He appeared to know, and he said sometimes in a covert way, that somebody had gathered certain information in a certain region about a certain missing family. Once he happened to say, speaking to himself. "I think I have got him!" Then for three days he remained moody without speaking a word. It appeared that the clue which he thought he had was broken.



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HIS NAME WAS JAVERT, AND HE WAS ONE OF THE POLICE

But, and this is the necessary corrective to what the meaning of certain words may have presented in too absolute a sense, there can be nothing really infallible in a human creature, and the very peculiarity of instinct is that it can be disturbed, followed up, and routed. Were this not so it would be superior to intelligence, and the beast would be in possession of a purer light than man.

Javert was evidently somewhat disconcerted by the completely natural air and the tranquillity of Monsieur Madeleine.

One day, however, his strange manner appeared to make an impression upon Monsieur Madeleine. The occasion was this:

FATHER FAUCHELEVENT

Monsieur Madeleine was walking one morning along one of the unpaved alleys of M—— sur M——; he heard a shouting and saw a crowd at a little distance. He went to the spot. An old man, named Father Fauchelevent, had fallen under his cart, his horse being thrown down.

This Fauchelevent was one of the few who were still enemies of Monsieur Madeleine at this time. When Madeleine arrived in the place, the business of Fauchelevent, who was a notary of long-standing, and very well-read for a rustic, was beginning to decline. Fauchelevent had seen this mere artisan grow rich, while he himself a professional man, had been going to ruin. This had filled him with jealousy, and he had done what he could on all occasions to injure Madeleine. Then came bankruptcy, and the old man, having nothing but a horse and cart, as he was without family, and without children, was compelled to earn his living as a carman.

The horse had his thighs broken, and could not stir. The old man was caught between the wheels. Unluckily he had fallen so that the whole weight rested upon his breast. The cart was heavily loaded. Father Fauchelevent was uttering doleful groans. They had tried to pull him out, but in vain. An unlucky effort, inexpert help, a false push, might crush him. It was impossible to extricate him otherwise than by raising the waggon from beneath. Javert, who came up at the moment of the accident, had sent for a jack.

Monsieur Madeleine came. The crowd fell back with respect.

"Help," cried old Fauchelevent. "Who is a good fellow to save an old man?"

Monsieur Madeleine turned towards the bystanders:

"Has anybody a jack?"

"They have gone for one," replied a peasant.

"How soon will it be here?"

"We sent to the nearest place, to Flachot Place, where there is a blacksmith; but it will take a good quarter of an hour at least."

"A quarter of an hour!" exclaimed Madeleine.

It had rained the night before, the road was soft, the cart was sinking deeper every moment, and pressing more and more on the breast of the old carman. It was evident that in less than five minutes his ribs would be crushed.

"We cannot wait a quarter of an hour," said Madeleine to the peasants who were looking on.

"We must!"

"But it will be too late! Don't you see that the waggon is sinking all the while?"

"It can't be helped."

"Listen," resumed Madeleine, "there is room enough still under the waggon for a man to crawl in, and lift it with his back. In half a minute we will have the poor man out. Is there nobody here who has strength and courage? Five louis d'ors for him!"

Nobody stirred in the crowd.

"Ten louis," said Madeleine.

The bystanders dropped their eyes. One of them muttered: "He'd have to be devilish stout. And then he would risk getting crushed."

"Come," said Madeleine, "twenty louis."

The same silence.

"It is not willingness which they lack," said a voice.

Monsieur Madeleine turned and saw Javert. He had not noticed him when he came.

Javert continued:

"It is strength. He must be a terrible man who can raise a waggon like that on his back."

Then, looking fixedly at Monsieur Madeleine, he went on emphasising every word that he uttered:

"Monsieur Madeleine, I have known but one man capable of doing what you call for."

Madeleine shuddered.

Javert added, with an air of indifference, but without taking his eyes from Madeleine:

"He was a convict."

"Ah!" said Madeleine.

"In the galleys at Toulon."

Madeleine became pale.

Meanwhile the cart was slowly settling down. Father Fauchelevent roared and screamed:

"I am dying! my ribs are breaking! a jack! anything! oh!"

Madeleine looked around him:

"Is there nobody, then, who wants to earn twenty louis and save this poor old man's life."

None of the bystanders moved. Javert resumed:

"I have known but one man who could take the place of a jack; that was that convict."

"Oh! how it crushes me!" cried the old man.

Madeleine raised his head, met the falcon eye of Javert still fixed upon him, looked at the immovable peasants, and smiled sadly. Then, without saying a word, he fell on his knees, and even before the crowd had time to utter a cry, he was under the cart.

There was an awful moment of suspense and of silence.

Madeleine, lying almost flat under the fearful weight, was twice seen to try in vain to bring his elbows and knees nearer together. They cried out to him: "Father Madeleine! come out from there!" Old Fauchelevent himself said: "Monsieur Madeleine! go away! I must die, you see that; leave me! you will be crushed too." Madeleine made no answer.

The bystanders held their breath. The wheels were still sinking and it had now become almost impossible for Madeleine to extricate himself.

All at once the enormous mass started, the cart rose slowly, the wheels came half out of the ruts. A smothered voice was heard, crying: "Quick! help!" It was Madeleine, who had just made a final effort.

They all rushed to the work. The devotion of one man had given strength and courage to all. The cart was lifted by twenty arms. Old Fauchelevent was safe.

Madeleine arose. He was very pale, though dripping with sweat. His clothes were torn and covered with mud. All wept. The old man kissed his knees and called him the good God. He himself wore on his face an indescribable expression of joyous and celestial suffering, and he looked with tranquil eye upon Javert, who was still watching him.

THE IDLENESS OF MONSIEUR BAMATABOIS

There is in all small cities, and there was at M—— sur M—— in particular, a set of young men who nibble their fifteen hundred livres of income in the country with the same air with which their fellows devour two hundred thousand francs a year at Paris. They are beings of the great neuter species; geldings, parasites, nobodies, who have a little land, a little folly, and a little wit, who would be clowns in a drawing-room, and think themselves gentlemen in a bar-room, who talk about "my fields, my woods, my peasants," hiss the actresses at the theatre to prove that they are persons of taste, quarrel with the officers of the garrison to show that they are gallant, hunt, smoke, gape, drink, take snuff, play billiards, stare at passengers getting out of the coach, live at the café, dine at the inn, hold fast to a sou, overdo the fashions, admire tragedy, despise women, wear out their old boots, copy London as reflected from Paris, and Paris as reflected from Pont-à-Mousson, grow stupid as they grow old, do no work, do no good, and not much harm.

Eight or ten months after what has been related in the preceding pages, in the early part of January, 1823, one evening when it had been snowing, one of these dandies, one of these idlers, a "well-intentioned" man, for he wore a morillo, very warmly wrapped in one of those large cloaks which completed the fashionable costume in cold weather, was amusing himself with tormenting a creature who was walking back and forth before the window of the officers' café.

Every time that the woman passed before him, he threw out at her, with a puff of smoke from his cigar, some remark which he thought was witty and pleasant, as: "How ugly you are!" "Are you trying to hide?" "You have lost your teeth!" etc., etc. This gentleman's name was Monsieur Bamatabois. The woman, a rueful, bedizened spectre, who was walking backwards and forwards upon the snow, did not answer him, did not even look at him, but continued her walk in silence and with a dismal regularity that brought her under his sarcasm every five minutes, like the condemned soldier who at stated periods returns under the rods. This failure to secure attention doubtless piqued the loafer, who, taking advantage of the moment when she turned, came up behind her with a stealthy step and stifling his laughter, stooped down, seized a handful of snow from the side walk, and threw it hastily into her back between her naked shoulders. The girl roared with rage, turned, bounded like a panther, and rushed upon the man, burying her nails in his face. It was Fantine.

At the noise which this made, the officers came out of the café, a crowd gathered, and a large circle was formed, laughing, jeering, and applauding, around this centre of attraction composed of two beings who could hardly be recognized as a man and a woman, the man defending himself, his hat knocked off, the woman kicking and striking, her head bare, shrieking, livid with wrath, and horrible.

Suddenly a tall man advanced quickly from the crowd, seized the woman by her muddy satin waist, and said: "Follow me!"

The woman raised her head; her furious voice died out at once. Her eyes were glassy, from livid she had become pale, and she shuddered with a shudder of terror. She recognised Javert.

The dandy profited by this to steal away.

SOLUTION OF SOME QUESTIONS OF MUNICIPAL POLICE

Javert dismissed the bystanders, broke up the circle, and walked off rapidly towards the Bureau of Police, which is at the end of the square, dragging the poor creature after him. She made no resistance, but followed mechanically. Neither spoke a word. The flock of spectators, in a paroxysm of joy, followed with their jokes.

When they reached the Bureau of Police, which was a low hall warmed by a stove, and guarded by a sentinel, with a grated window looking on the street, Javert opened the door, entered with Fantine, and closed the door behind him, to the great disappointment of the curious crowd who stood upon tiptoe and stretched their necks before the dirty window of the guard-house, in their endeavours to see. Curiosity is a kind of glutton. To see is to devour.

On entering Fantine crouched down in a corner motionless and silent, like a frightened dog.

The sergeant of the guard placed a lighted candle on the table. Javert sat down, drew from his pocket a sheet of stamped paper, and began to write.

When he had finished, he signed his name, folded the paper, and handed it to the sergeant of the guard, saying: "Take three men, and carry this girl to jail." Then turning to Fantine: "You are in for six months."

The hapless woman shuddered.

"Six months! six months in prison!" cried she. "Six months to earn seven sous a day! but what will become of Cosette! my daughter! my daughter! Why, I still owe more than a hundred francs to the Thenardiers, Monsieur Inspector, do you know that?"

She dragged herself along on the floor, dirted by the muddy boots of all these men, without rising, clasping her hands, and moving rapidly on her knees.

"Monsieur Javert," said she, "I beg your pity. I assure you that I was not in the wrong. If you had seen the beginning, you would have seen. I swear to you by the good God that I was not in the wrong. That gentleman, whom I do not know, threw snow in my back. Have they the right to throw snow into our backs when we are going along quietly like that without doing any harm to anybody? That made me wild. I am not very well, you see! and then he had already been saying things to me for some time. 'You are homely!' 'You have no teeth!' I know too well that I have lost my teeth. I did not do anything; I thought: 'He is a gentleman who is amusing himself.' I was not immodest with him, I did not speak to him. It was then that he threw the snow at me. Monsieur Javert, my good Monsieur Inspector! was there no one there who saw it and can tell you that this is true! I perhaps did wrong to get angry. You know, at the first moment, we cannot master ourselves. We are excitable. And then, to have something so cold thrown into your back when you are not expecting it. I did wrong to spoil the gentleman's hat. Why has he gone away? I would ask his pardon. Oh! I would beg his pardon. Have pity on me now this once, Monsieur Javert. O my Cosette, O my little angel of the good, blessed Virgin, what will she become, poor famished child! I tell you the Thenardiers are inn-keepers, boors, they have no consideration. They must have money. Do not put me in prison! Do you see, she is a little one that they will put out on the highway, to do what she can, in the very heart of winter; you must feel pity for such a thing, good Monsieur Javert. If she were older, she could earn her living, but she cannot at such an age. Have pity on me, Monsieur Javert.

She talked thus, bent double, shaken with sobs, blinded by tears, her neck bare, clenching her hands, coughing with a dry and short cough, stammering very feebly with an agonised voice. Great grief is a divine and terrible radiance which transfigures the wretched. At that moment Fantine had again become beautiful. At certain instants she stopped and tenderly kissed the policeman's coat. She would have softened a heart of granite; but you cannot soften a heart of wood.

"Come," said Javert, "I have heard you. Haven't you got through? March off at once! you have your six months! the Eternal Father in person could do nothing for you."

At those solemn words, *The Eternal Father in person could do nothing for you,* she understood that her sentence was fixed. She sank down murmuring:

"Mercy!"

Javert turned his back.

The soldiers seized her by the arms.

A few minutes before a man had entered without being noticed. He had closed the door, and stood with his back against it, and heard the despairing supplication of Fantine.

When the soldiers put their hands upon the wretched being, who would not rise, he stepped forward out of the shadow and said:

"One moment, if you please!"

Javert raised his eyes and recognised Monsieur Madeleine. He took off his hat, and bowing with a sort of angry awkwardness:

"Pardon, Monsieur Mayor—"

"Inspector Javert, set this woman at liberty."

"Monsieur Mayor, that cannot be done."

"Why?" said Monsieur Madeleine.

"This wretched woman has insulted a citizen."

"Inspector Javert," replied Monsieur Madeleine, in a conciliating and calm tone, "listen. You are an honest man, and I have no objection to explain myself to you. The truth is this. I was passing through the square when you arrested this woman, there was a crowd still there; I learned the circumstances; I know all about it; it is the citizen who was in the wrong, and who, by a faithful police, would have been arrested."

Javert went on:

"I obey my duty. My duty requires that this woman spend six months in prison."

Monsieur Madeleine answered mildly:

"Listen to this. She shall not a day."

At these decisive words, Javert had the boldness to look the mayor in the eye, and said, but still in a tone of profound respect:

"I am very sorry to resist Monsieur the Mayor; it is the first time in my life, but he will deign to permit me to observe that I am within the limits of my own authority. I will speak, since the mayor desires it, on the matter of the citizen. Iwas there. This girl fell upon Monsieur Bamatabois, who is an elector and the owner of that fine house with a balcony, that stands at the corner of the esplanade, three stories high, and all of hewn stone. Indeed, there are some things in this world which must be considered. However that may be, Monsieur Mayor, this matter belongs to the police of the street; that concerns me, and I detain the woman Fantine."

At this Monsieur Madeleine folded his arms and said in a severe tone which nobody in the city had ever yet heard:

"The matter of which you speak belongs to the municipal police. By the terms of articles nine, eleven, fifteen, and sixty-six of the code of criminal law, I am the judge of it. I order that this woman be set at liberty."

Javert endeavoured to make a last attempt.

"But, Monsieur Mayor——"

"I refer you to article eighty-one of the law of December 13th, 1799, upon illegal imprisonment."

"Monsieur Mayor, permit——"

"Not another word."

"However——"

"Retire," said Monsieur Madeleine.

Javert received the blow, standing in front, and with open breast like a Russian soldier. He bowed to the ground before the mayor, and went out.

Fantine stood by the door and looked at him with stupor as he passed before her.

When Javert was gone, Monsieur Madeleine turned towards her, and said to her, speaking slowly and with difficulty, like a man who is struggling that he may not weep:

"Why did you not apply to me? But now: I will pay your debts, I will have your child come to you, or you shall go to her. You shall live here, at Paris, or where you will. I take charge of your child and you. You shall do no more work, if you do not wish to.

This was more than poor Fantine could bear. To have Cosette! to live free, rich, happy, honest, with Cosette! to see suddenly spring up in the midst of her misery all these realities of paradise! She looked as if she were stupefied at the man who was speaking to her, and could only pour out two or three sobs: "Oh! oh! oh!" Her limbs gave way, she threw herself on her knees before Monsieur Madeleine, and, before he could prevent it, he felt that she had seized his hand and carried it to her lips.

Then she fainted.

BOOK IV—JAVERT

THE BEGINNING OF THE REST

Monsieur Madeleine had Fantine taken to the infirmary, which was in his own house. He confided her to the sisters, who put her to bed. A violent fever came on, and she passed a part of the night in delirious ravings. Finally, she fell asleep.

Towards noon the following day, Fantine awoke. She heard a breathing near her bed, drew aside the curtain, and saw Monsieur

Madeleine standing gazing at something above his head. His look was full of compassionate and supplicating agony. She followed its direction, and saw that it was fixed upon a crucifix nailed against the wall.

From that moment Monsieur Madeleine was transfigured in the eyes of Fantine; he seemed to her clothed upon with light. He was absorbed in a kind of prayer. She gazed at him for a long while without daring to interrupt him; at last she said timidly:

"What are you doing?"

Monsieur Madeleine had been in that place for an hour waiting for Fantine to awake. He took her hand, felt her pulse, and said:

"How do you feel?"

"Very well. I have slept," she said. "I think I am getting better—this will be nothing."

Then he said, answering the question she had first asked him, as if she had just asked it:

"I was praying to the martyr who is on high."

And in his thought he added: "For the martyr who is here below."

Monsieur Madeleine had passed the night and morning in informing himself about Fantine. He knew all now, he had learned, even in all its poignant details, the history of Fantine.

He went on:

"You have suffered greatly, poor mother. Oh! do not lament, you have now the portion of the elect. It is in this way that mortals become angels. It is not their fault; they do not know how to set about it otherwise. This hell from which you have come out is the first step towards Heaven. We must begin by that."

He sighed deeply; but she smiled with this sublime smile from which two teeth were gone.

That same night, Javert wrote a letter. Next morning he carried this letter himself to the post-office of M—— sur M——. It was directed to Paris and bore this address: "To Monsieur Chabouillet, Secretary of Monsieur the Prefect of Police."

As the affair of the Bureau of Police had been noised about, the postmistress and some others who saw the letter before it was sent, and who recognised Javert's handwriting in the address, thought he was sending in his resignation. Monsieur Madeleine wrote immediately to the Thenardiers. Fantine owed them a hundred and twenty francs. He sent them three hundred francs, telling them to pay themselves out of it, and bring the child at once to M—— sur M——, where her mother, who was sick, wanted her.

This astonished Thenardier.

"The Devil!' he said to his wife, "we won't let go of the child. It may be that this lark will become a milch cow. I guess some silly fellow had been smitten by the mother."

He replied by a bill of five hundred and some odd francs carefully drawn up. In this bill figured two incontestable items for upwards of three hundred francs, one of a physician and the other of an apothecary who had attended and supplied Eponine and Azelma during two long illnesses. Cosette, as we have said, had not been ill. This was only a slight substitution of names. Thenardier wrote at the bottom of the bill: *"Received on account three hundred francs."*

Monsieur Madeleine immediately sent three hundred frances more, and wrote: "Make haste to bring Cosette."

"Christy!" said Thenardier, "we won't let go of the girl."

Meanwhile Fantine had not recovered. She still remained in the infirmary.

Monsieur Madeleine came to see her twice a day, and at each visit she asked him:

"Shall I see my Cosette soon?"

He answered:

"Perhaps to-morrow. I expect her every moment."

And the mother's pale face would brighten.

"Ah!" she would say, "how happy I shall be."

We have just said she did not recover: on the contrary, her condition seemed to become worse from week to week. That handful of snow applied to the naked skin between her shoulder-blades, had caused a sudden check of perspiration, in consequence of which the disease, which had been forming for some years, at last attacked her violently. They were just at that time beginning in the diagnosis and treatment of lung diseases to follow the fine theory of Laennec. The doctor sounded her lungs and shook his head.

Monsieur Madeleine said to him:

"Well?"

"Has she not a child she is anxious to see?" said the doctor.

"Yes."

"Well then, make haste to bring her."

Monsieur Madeleine gave a shudder.

Fantine asked him: "What did the doctor say?"

Monsieur Madeleine tried to smile.

"He told us to bring your child at once. That will restore your health."

"Oh!" she cried, "he is right. But what is the matter with these Thenardiers that they keep my Cosette from me? Oh! She is coming! Here at last I see happiness near me."

The Thenardiers, however, did not "let go of the child;" they gave a hundred bad reasons. Cosette was too delicate to travel in the winter time, and then there were a number of little petty debts, of which they were collecting the bills, etc., etc.

"I will send somebody for Cosette," said Monsieur Madeleine, "if necessary, I will go myself."

He wrote at Fantine's dictation this letter, which she signed.

"Monsieur Thenardier:

"You will deliver Cosette to the bearer.

"He will settle all small debts.

"I have the honour to salute you with consideration.

"FANTINE."

In the meanwhile a serious matter intervened. In vain we chisel, as best we can, the mysterious block of which our life is made, the black vein of destiny reappears continually.

HOW JEAN CAN BECOME CHAMP

ONE morning Monsieur Madeleine was in his office arranging for some pressing business of the mayoralty, in case he should decide to go to Montfermeil himself, when he was informed that Javert, the inspector of police, wished to speak with him. On hearing this name spoken, Monsieur Madeleine could not repress a disagreeable impression. Since the affair of the Bureau of Police, Javert had more than ever avoided him, and Monsieur Madeleine had not seen him at all.

"Let him come in," said he.

Javert entered.

Monsieur Madeleine remained seated near the fire, looking over a bundle of papers upon which he was making notes, and which contained the returns of the police patrol. He did not disturb himself at all for Javert: he could not but think of poor Fantine, and it was fitting that he should receive him very coldly.

Javert respectfully saluted the mayor, who had his back towards him. The mayor did not look up, but continued to make notes on the papers.

Javert advanced a few steps, and paused without breaking silence.

At last the mayor laid down his pen and turned partly round:

"Well, what is it? What is the matter, Javert?"

Javert remained silent a moment as if collecting himself; then raised his voice with a sad solemnity which did not, however, exclude simplicity: "There has been a criminal act committed, Monsieur Mayor."

"What act?"

"An inferior agent of the government has been wanting in respect to a magistrate, in the gravest manner. I come, as is my duty, to bring the fact to your knowledge."

"Who is this agent?" asked Monsieur Madeleine.

"I," said Javert.

"You?"

"I."

"And who is the magistrate who has to complain of this agent?"

"You, Monsieur Mayor."

Monsieur Madeleine straightened himself in his chair. Javert continued, with serious looks and eyes still cast down.

"Monsieur Mayor, I come to ask you to be so kind as to make charges and procure my dismissal."

Monsieur Madeleine, amazed, opened his mouth. Javert interrupted him:

"You will say that I might tender my resignation, but that is not enough. To resign is honourable; I have done wrong. I ought to be punished. I must be dismissed."

And after a pause he added:

"Monsieur Mayor, you were severe to me the other day, unjustly. Be justly so to-day."

"Ah, indeed! why? What is all this nonsense? What does it all mean? What is the criminal act committed by you against me? What have you done to me? How have you wronged me? You accuse yourself: do you wish to be relieved?"

"Dismissed," said Javert.

"Dismissed it is then. It is very strange. I do not understand you."

"Monsieur Mayor, six weeks ago, after that scene about that girl, I was enraged and I denounced you."

"Denounced me?"

"To the Prefecture of Police at Paris."

Monsieur Madeleine, who did not laugh much oftener than Javert, began to laugh:

"As a mayor having encroached upon the police?"

"As a former convict."

The mayor became livid.

Javert, who had not raised his eyes, continued:

"I believed it. For a long while I had had suspicions. A resemblance, information you obtained at Faverolles, your immense strength; the affair of old Fauchelevent; your skill as a marksman; your leg which drags a little—and in fact I don't know what other stupidities; but at last I took you for a man named Jean Valjean."

"Named what? How did you call that name?"

"Jean Valjean. He was a convict I saw twenty years ago, when I was adjutant of the galley guard at Toulon. After leaving the galleys this Valjean, it appears, robbed a bishop's palace, then he committed another robbery with weapons in his hands, in a highway, on a little Savoyard. For eight years his whereabouts have been unknown, and search has been made for him. I fancied—in short, I have done this thing. Anger determined me, and I denounced you to the prefect."

M. Madeleine, who had taken up the file of papers again, a few moments before, said with a tone of perfect indifference: "And what answer did you get?"

"That I was crazy."

"Well!"

"Well; they were right."

"It is fortunate that you think so!"

"It must be so, the real Jean Valjean has been found."

The paper that M. Madeleine held fell from his hand; he raised his head, looked steadily at Javert, and said in an inexpressible tone:

"Ah!"

Javert continued:

"I will tell you how it is, Monsieur Mayor. There was, it appears, in the country, near Ailly-le-Haut Clocher, a simple sort of fellow who was called Father Champmathieu. He was very poor. Nobody paid any attention to him. Such folks live, one hardly knows how. Finally, this last fall, Father Champmathieu was arrested for stealing cider apples from——, but that is of no consequence. There was a theft, a wall scaled, branches of trees broken. Our Champmathieu was arrested; he had even then a branch of an apple-tree in his hand. The rogue was caged. So far, it was nothing more than a penitentiary matter. But here comes in the hand of Providence. The jail being in a bad condition, the police justice thought it best to take him to Arras, where the prison of the department is. In this prison at Arras there was a former convict named Brevet, who is there for some trifle, and who, for his good conduct, has been made turnkey. No sooner was Champmathieu set down, than Brevet cried out: 'Ha, ha! I know that man. He is a *fagot.*' [1]

" 'Look up here, my good man. You are Jean Valjean.' 'Jean Valjean, who is Jean Valjean?' Champmathieu plays off the astonished. 'Don't play ignorance,' said Brevet. 'You are Jean Valjean; you were in the galleys at Toulon. It is twenty years ago. We were there together.' Champmathieu denied it all. Faith! you understand; they fathomed it. The case was worked up. Besides Brevet there are only two convicts who have seen Jean Valjean. They are convicts for life; their names are Cochepaille and Chenildieu. These men were brought from the galleys and confronted with the pretended Champmathieu. They did not hesitate. To them as well as to Brevet it was Jean Valjean. Same age; fifty-four years old; same height; same appearance, in fact the same man; it is he. At this time it was that

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[1] Former convict.

I sent my denunciation to the Prefecture at Paris. They replied that I was out of my mind, and that Jean Valjean was at Arras in the hands of Justice. You may imagine how that astonished me; I who believed that I had here the same Jean Valjean. I wrote to the justice; he sent for me and brought Champmathieu before me."

"Well," interrupted Monsieur Madeleine.

Javert replied, with an incorruptible and sad face:

"Monsieur Mayor, truth is truth. I am sorry for it, but that man is Jean Valjean. I recognised him also."

Monsieur Madeleine said in a very low voice:

"Are you sure?"

Javert began to laugh with the suppressed laugh which indicates profound conviction.

"H'm, sure!"

He remained a moment in thought, mechanically taking up pinches of the powdered wood used to dry ink, from the box on the table, and then added:

"And now that I see the real Jean Valjean, I do not understand how I ever could have believed anything else. I beg your pardon, Monsieur Mayor."

In uttering these serious and supplicating words to him, who six weeks before had humiliated him before the entire guard, and had said "Retire!" Javert, this haughty man, was unconsciously full of simplicity and dignity. Monsieur Madeleine answered his request, by this abrupt question:

"And what did the man say?"

"Oh, bless me! Monsieur Mayor, the affair is a bad one. If it is Jean Valjean, it is a second offence. To climb a wall, break a branch, and take apples, for a child is only a trespass; for a man it is a misdemeanour; for a convict it is a crime. Scaling a wall and theft includes everything. It is not a case for a police court, but for the assizes. It is not a few days' imprisonment, but the galleys for life. And then there is the affair of the little Savoyard, who I hope will be found. Oh, the rascal is cunning! But it is all the same, there is the evidence. Four persons have recognised him, and the old villain will be condemned. It has been taken to the assizes at Arras. I am going to testify. I have been summoned."

Monsieur Madeleine had turned again to his desk, and was quietly looking over his papers, reading and writing alternately, like a man pressed with business. He turned again towards Javert:

"Did you not tell me you were going to Arras in eight or ten days on this matter?"

"Sooner than that, Monsieur Mayor."

"What day then?"

"I think I told monsieur that the case would be tried to-morrow, and that I should leave by the diligence to-night."

Monsieur Madeleine made an imperceptible motion.

"And how long will the matter last?"

"One day at longest. Sentence will be pronounced at latest to-morrow evening. But I shall not wait for the sentence, which is certain; as soon as my testimony is given I shall return here."

"Very well," said Monsieur Madeleine.

And he dismissed him with a wave of his hand.

Javert did not go.

"Your pardon, monsieur," said he.

"What more is there?" asked Monsieur Madeleine.

"Monsieur Mayor, there is one thing more to which I desire to call your attention."

"What is it?"

"It is that I ought to be dismissed."

Monsieur Madeleine arose.

"Javert you are a man of honour and I esteem you. You exaggerate your fault. Besides, this is an offence which concerns me. You are worthy of promotion rather than disgrace. I desire you to keep your place."

Javert looked at Monsieur Madeleine with his calm eyes, in whose depths it seemed that one beheld his conscience, unenlightened, but stern and pure, and said in a tranquil voice:

"Monsieur Mayor, I cannot agree to that."

"I repeat," said Monsieur Madeleine, "that this matter concerns me."

But Javert, with his one idea, continued:

"As to exaggerating, I do not exaggerate. This is the way I reason. I have unjustly suspected you. That is nothing. It is our province to suspect, although it may be an abuse of our right to suspect our superiors. But without proofs and in a fit of anger, with revenge as my aim, I denounced you as a convict—you, a respectable man, a mayor, and a magistrate. This is a serious matter very serious. I have committed an offence against authority in your person, I who am the agent of authority. If one of my subordinates had done what I have, I would have pronounced him unworthy of the service, and sent him away.

All this was said in a tone of proud humility, a desperate and resolute tone, which gave an indescribably whimsical grandeur to this oddly honest man.

"We will see," said Monsieur Madeleine.

And he held out his hand to him.

Javert started back, and said fiercely:

"Pardon, Monsieur Mayor, that should not be. A mayor does not give his hand to a spy."

He added between his teeth:

"Spy, yes; from the moment I abused the power of my position, I have been nothing better than a spy!"

Then he bowed profoundly, and went towards the door.

There he turned around: his eyes yet downcast.

"Monsieur Mayor, I will continue in the service until I am relieved."

He went out. Monsieur Madeleine sat musing, listening to his firm and resolute step as it died away along the corridor.

BOOK V—THE CHAMPMATHIEU AFFAIR

SISTER SIMPLICE

The events which follow were never all known at M—— sur M——. But the few which did leak out have left such memories in that city, that it would be a serious omission in this book if we did not relate them in their minutest details.

Among these details, the reader will meet with two or three improbable circumstances, which we will preserve from respect for the truth.

In the afternoon following the visit of Javert, M. Madeleine went to see Fantine as usual.

Before going to Fantine's room, he sent for Sister Simplice.

The two nuns who attended the infirmary, Lazarists as all these Sisters of Charity are, were called Sister Perpétue and Sister Simplice.

Monsieur Madeleine took Sister Simplice aside and recommended Fantine to her with a singular emphasis, which the sister remembered at a later day.

On leaving the sister he approached Fantine.

Fantine awaited each day the appearance of Monsieur Madeleine as one awaits a ray of warmth and of joy. She would say to the sisters: "I live only when the Mayor is here."

That day she had more fever. As soon as she saw Monsieur Madeleine, she asked him:

"Cosette?"

He answered with a smile:

"Very soon."

Monsieur Madeleine, while with Fantine, seemed the same as usual. Only he stayed an hour instead of half an hour, to the great satisfaction of Fantine. He made a thousand charges to everybody that the sick woman might want for nothing. It was noticed that at one moment his countenance became very sombre. But this was explained when it was known that the doctor had, bending close to his ear, said to him: "She is sinking fast."

Then he returned to the mayor's office, and the office boy saw him examine attentively a road-map of France which hung in his room. He made a few figures in pencil upon a piece of paper.

SHREWDNESS OF MASTER SCAUFFLAIRE

From the mayor's office he went to the outskirts of the city, to a Fleming's, Master Scaufflaer, Frenchified into Scaufflaire, who kept horses to let and "chaises if desired."

In order to go to Scaufflaire's, the nearest way was by a rarely frequented street, on which was the parsonage of the parish in which Monsieur Madeleine lived. The curé was, it was said, a worthy and respectable man, and a good counsellor. At the moment when Monsieur Madeleine arrived in front of the parsonage, there was but one person passing in the street, and he remarked this: the mayor, after passing by the curé's house, stopped, stood still a moment, then turned back and retraced his steps as far as the door of the parsonage, which was a large door with an iron knocker. He seized the knocker quickly and raised it; then he stopped anew, stood a short time as if in thought, and after a few seconds, instead of letting the knocker fall smartly, he replaced it gently, and resumed his walk with a sort of haste that he had not shown before.

Monsieur Madeleine found Master Scaufflaire at home busy repairing a harness.

"Master Scaufflaire," he asked, "have you a good horse?"

"Monsieur Mayor," said the Fleming, "all my horses are good. What do you understand by a good horse?"

"I understand a horse that can go twenty leagues in a day."

"The devil!" said the Fleming, "twenty leagues!"

"Yes."

"Before a chaise?"

"Yes."

"And how long will he rest after the journey?"

"He must be able to start again the next day in case of need."

"To do the same thing again?"

"Yes."

"The devil! and it is twenty leagues?"

Monsieur Madeleine drew from his pocket the paper on which he had pencilled the figures. He showed them to the Fleming. They were the figures, 5, 6, 8½.

"You see," said he. "Total, nineteen and a half, that is to say twenty leagues."

"Monsieur Mayor," resumed the Fleming, "I have just what you want. My little white horse, you must have seen him sometimes passing; he is a little beast from Bas-Boulonnais. He is full of fire.

"And he will make the trip?"

"Your twenty leagues, all the way at a full trot, and in less than eight hours. But there are some conditions."

"Name them."

"First, you must let him breathe an hour when you are half way; he will eat, and somebody must be by while he eats to prevent the tavern boy from stealing his oats; for I have noticed that at taverns, oats are oftener drunk by the stable boys than eaten by the horses."

"Somebody shall be there."

"Secondly—is the chaise for Monsieur the Mayor?"

"Yes."

"Monsieur the Mayor knows how to drive?"

"Yes."

"Well, Monsieur the Mayor will travel alone and without baggage, so as not to overload the horse."

"Agreed."

"But Monsieur the Mayor, having no one with him, will be obliged to take the trouble of seeing to the oats himself."

"So said."

"I must have thirty francs a day, the day he rests included. Not a penny less, and the fodder of the beast at the expense of Monsieur the Mayor."

Monsieur Madeleine took three Napoleons from his purse and laid them on the table.

"There is two days, in advance.

"Fourthly, for such a trip, a chaise would be too heavy; that would tire the horse. Monsieur the Mayor must consent to travel in a little tilbury that I have."

"I consent to that."

"It is light, but it is open."

"It is all the same to me."

"Has Monsieur the Mayor reflected that it is winter?"

Monsieur Madeleine did not answer; the Fleming went on:

"That it is very cold?"

Monsieur Madeleine kept silence.

Master Scaufflaire continued:

"That it may rain?"

Monsieur Madeleine raised his head and said:

"The horse and the tilbury will be before my door to-morrow at half-past four in the morning."

"That is understood, Monsieur Mayor," answered Scaufflaire, then scratching a stain on the top of the table with his thumb nail, he resumed with that careless air that Flemings so well know how to associate with their shrewdness:

"Why, I have just thought of it! Monsieur the Mayor has not told me where he is going. Where is Monsieur the Mayor going?"

He had thought of nothing else since the beginning of the conversation, but without knowing why, he had not dared to ask the question.

"Has your horse good forelegs?" said Monsieur Madeleine.

"Yes, Monsieur Mayor. You will hold him up a little going downhill. Is there much downhill between here and where you are going?"

"Don't forget to be at my door precisely at half-past four in the morning," answered Monsieur Madeleine, and he went out.

The Fleming was left "dumb-founded," as he said himself some time afterwards.

The mayor had been gone two or three minutes, when the door again opened; it was the mayor.

He had the same impassive and absent-minded air as ever.

"Monsieur Scaufflaire," said he, "at what sum do you value the horse and tilbury that you furnish me, the one carrying the other?"

"The one drawing the other, Monsieur Mayor," said the Fleming with a loud laugh.

"As you like. How much?"

"Does Monsieur the Mayor wish to buy them?"

"No, but at all events I wish to garrantee them to you. On my return you can give me back the amount. At how much do you value horse and chaise?"

"Five hundred francs, Monsieur Mayor!"

"Here it is."

Monsieur Madeleine placed a banknote on the table, then went out, and this time did not return.

Master Scaufflaire regretted terribly that he had not said a thousand francs. In fact, the horse and tilbury, in the lump, were worth a hundred crowns.

The Fleming called his wife and related the affair to her. Where the deuce could the mayor be going? They talked it over. "He is going to Paris," said the wife. "I don't believe it," said the husband. Monsieur Madeleine had forgotten the paper on which he had marked the figures, and left it on the mantel. The Fleming seized it and studied it. Five, six, eight and a half? this must mean the relays of the post. He turned to his wife: "I have found it out." "How?" "It is five leagues from here to Hesdin, six from Hesdin to Saint Pol, eight and a half from Saint Pol to Arras. He is going to Arras."

Meanwhile Monsieur Madeleine had reached home. To return from Master Scaufflaire's he had taken a longer road, as if the door of the parsonage were a temptation to him, and he wished to avoid it. He went up to his room, and shut himself in, which was nothing remarkable, for he usually went to bed early. However, the janitress of the factory, who was at the same time Monsieur Madeleine's only servant, observed that his light was out at half-past eight, and she mentioned it to the cashier who came in, adding:

"Is Monsieur the Mayor sick? I thought that his manner was a little singular."

The cashier occupied a room situated exactly beneath Monsieur Madeleine's. He paid no attention to the portress's words, went to bed, and went to sleep. Towards midnight he suddenly awoke; he had heard, in his sleep, a noise overhead. He listened. It was a step that went and came, as if someone were walking in the room above. He listened more attentively, and recognised Monsieur Madeleine's step. That appeared strange to him; ordinarily no noise was made in Monsieur Madeleine's room before his hour of rising. A moment afterwards, the cashier heard something that sounded like the opening and shutting of a wardrobe, then a piece of furniture was moved, there was another silence, and the step began again. The cashier rose up in bed, threw off his drowsiness, looked out, and through his window-panes, saw upon an opposite wall the ruddy reflection of a lighted window. From the direction of the rays, it could only be the window of Monsieur Madeleine's chamber. The reflection trembled as if it came rather from a bright fire than from a light. The shadow of the sash could not be seen, which indicated that the window was wide open. Cold as it was, this open window was surprising. The cashier fell asleep again. An hour or two afterwards he awoke again. The same step, slow and regular, was coming and going constantly over his head.

The reflection continued visible upon the wall, but it was now pale and steady like the light from a lamp or a candle. The window was still open.

Let us see what was passing in Monsieur Madeleine's room.

A TEMPEST IN A BRAIN

The reader has doubtless divined that Monsieur Madeleine is none other than Jean Valjean.

We have but little to add to what the reader already knows, concerning what had happened to Jean Valjean, since his adventure with Petit Gervais. From that moment, we have seen, he was another man. What the bishop had desired to do with him, that he had executed. It was more than a transformation—it was a transfiguration.

He succeeded in escaping from sight, sold the bishop's silver, keeping only the candlesticks as souvenirs, glided quietly from city to city across France, came to M—— sur M——, conceived the idea that we have described, accomplished what we have related, gained the point of making himself unassailable and inaccessible, and thenceforward, established at M—— sur M——, happy to feel his conscience saddened by his past, and the last half of his existence giving the lie to the first, he lived peaceable, reassured, and hopeful, having but two thoughts: to conceal his name, and to sanctify his life; to escape from men and to return to God.

Never had the two ideas that governed the unfortunate man whose sufferings we are relating, engaged in so serious a struggle. He comprehended this confusedly, but thoroughly, from the first words that Javert pronounced on entering his office. At the moment when that name which he had so deeply buried was so strangely uttered, he was seized with stupor, and as if intoxicated by the sinister grotesqueness of his destiny, and through that stupor he felt the shudder which precedes great shocks; he bent like an oak at the approach of a storm, like a soldier at the approach of an assault. He felt clouds full of thunderings and lightnings gathering upon his head. Even while listening to Javert, his first thought was to go, to run, to denounce himself, to drag this Champmathieu out of prison, and to put himself in his place; it was painful and sharp as an incision into the living flesh, but passed away, and he said to himself: "Let us see! Let us see!"

He repressed this first generous impulse and recoiled before such heroism.

Doubtless it would have been fine if, after the holy words of the bishop, after so many years of repentance and self-denial, in the midst of a penitence admirably commenced, even in the presence of so terrible a conjecture, he had not faltered an instant, and had continued to march on with even pace towards that yawning pit at the bottom of which was heaven; this would have been fine, but this was not the case. We must render an account of what took place in that soul, and we can relate only what was there. What first gained control was the instinct of self preservation; he collected his ideas hastily, stifled his emotions, took into consideration the presence of Javert, the great danger, postponed any decision with the firmness of terror, banished from his mind all consideration of the course he should pursue, and resumed his calmness as a gladiator retakes his buckler.

For the rest of the day he was in this state, a tempest within, a perfect calm without; he took only what might be called precautionary measures. All was still confused and jostling in his brain; the agitation there was such that he did not see distinctly the form of any idea; and he could have told nothing of himself, unless it were that he had just received a terrible blow. He went according to his habit to the sick bed of Fantine, and prolonged his visit, by an instinct of kindness, saying to himself that he ought to do so, and recommend her earnestly to the sisters, in case it should happen that he would have to be absent. He felt vaguely that it would perhaps be necessary for him to go to Arras; and without having in the least decided upon this journey, he said to himself that, entirely free from suspicion as he was, there would be no difficulty in being a witness of what might pass, and he engaged Scaufflaire's tilbury, in order to be prepared for any emergency.

He dined with a good appetite.

Returning to his room he collected his thoughts.

He examined the situation and found it an unheard-of one; so unheard-of that in the midst of his revery, by some strange impulse of almost inexplicable anxiety, he rose from his chair, and bolted his door. He feared lest something might yet enter. He barricaded himself against all possibilities.

A moment afterwards he blew out his light. It annoyed him.

It seemed to him that somebody could see him.

Who? Somebody?

Alas! what he wanted to keep out of doors had entered; what he wanted to render blind was looking upon him. His conscience.

His conscience, that is to say, God.

At the first moment, however, he deluded himself; he had a feeling of safety and solitude; the bolt drawn, he believed himself invisible. Then he took possession of himself; he placed his elbows on the table, rested his head on his hand, and set himself to meditating in the darkness.

"Where am I? Am I not in a dream? What have I heard? Is it really true that I saw this Javert, and that he talked to me so? Who can this Champmathieu be? He resembles me then? Is it possible? When I think that yesterday I was so calm, and so far from suspecting anything! What was I doing yesterday at this time? What is there in this matter? How will it turn out? What is to be done?"

The first hour thus rolled away.

Little by little, however, vague outlines began to take form and to fix themselves in his meditation; he could perceive, with the precision of reality, not the whole of the situation, but a few details.

It seemed to him that he had just awaked from some wondrous slumber, and that he found himself gliding over a precipice in the middle of the night, standing, shivering, recoiling in vain, upon the very edge of an abyss. He perceived distinctly in the gloom an unknown man, a stranger, whom fate had mistaken for him, and was pushing into the gulf in his place. It was necessary, in order that the gulf should be closed, that some one should fall in, he or the other.

He had only to let it alone.

The light became complete, and he recognised this: That his place at the galleys was empty, that do what he could it was always awaiting him, that the robbing of Petit Gervais sent him back there, that his empty place would await him and attract him until he should be there, that this was inevitable and fatal. And then he said to himself: That at this very moment he had a substitute, that it appeared that a man named Champmathieu had that unhappy lot, and that, as for himself, present in future at the galleys in the person of this

Champmathieu, present in society under the name of Monsieur Madeleine, he had nothing more to fear, provided he did not prevent men from sealing upon the head of this Champmathieu that stone of infamy which, like the stone of the sepulchre, falls once never to rise again.

All this was so violent and so strange that he suddenly felt that kind of indescribable movement that no man experiences more than two or three times in his life, a sort of convulsion of the conscience that stirs up all that is dubious in the heart, which is composed of irony, of joy, and of despair, and which might be called a burst of interior laughter.

He hastily relighted his candle.

For the first time within eight years, the unhappy man had just tasted the bitter flavour of a wicked thought and a wicked action.

He spit it out with disgust.

He continued to question himself. He sternly asked himself what he had understood by this: "My object is attained." He declared that his life, in truth, did have an object. But what object? to conceal his name? to deceive the police? was it for so petty a thing that he had done all that he had done? had he no other object, which was the great one, which was the true one? To save, not his body, but his soul. To become honest and good again. To be an upright man! was it not that above all, that alone, which he had always wished, and which the bishop had enjoined upon him? To close the door on his past? But he was not closing it, great God! he was re-opening it by committing an infamous act! for he became a robber again, and the most odious of robbers! he robbed another of his existence, his life, his peace, his place in the world, he became an assassin! he murdered, he murdered in a moral sense a wretched man, he inflicted upon him that frightful life in death, that living burial, which is called the galleys! on the contrary, to deliver himself up, to save this man stricken by so ghastly a mistake, to reassume his name, to become again from duty the convict Jean Valjean; that was really to achieve his resurrection, and to close for ever the hell from whence he had emerged! to fall back into it in appearance, was to emerge in reality! he must do that! all he had done was nothing, if he did not do that! all his life was useless, all his suffering was lost. He had only to ask the question: "What is the use?" He felt that the bishop was there, that the bishop was present all the more that he was dead, that the bishop was looking fixedly at him, that henceforth Mayor Madeleine with all his virtues would be abominable to him, and the galley slave, Jean Valjean, would be admirable and pure in his sight. That men saw his mask, but the bishop saw his face. That men saw his life, but the bishop saw his conscience. He must then go to Arras, deliver the wrong Jean Valjean, denounce the right one. Alas! that was the greatest of sacrifices, the most poignant of victories, the final step to be taken, but he must do it. Mournful destiny! he could only enter into sanctity in the eyes of God, by returning into infamy in the eyes of men!

"Well," said he, "let us take this course! let us do our duty! Let us save this man!"

He pronounced these words in a loud voice, without perceiving that he was speaking aloud.

He took his books, verified them, and put them in order. He threw into the fire a package of notes which he held against needy small traders. He wrote a letter, which he sealed, and upon the envelope of which might have been read, if there had been any one in the room at the time: *Monsieur Laffitte, banker, Rue d'Artois, Paris.*

He drew from a secretary a pocket-book containing some banknotes and the passport that he had used that same year in going to the elections.

Had any one seen him while he was doing these various acts with such serious meditation, he would not have suspected what was passing within him. Still at intervals his lips quivered; at other times he raised his head and fixed his eye on some point of the wall, as if he saw just there something that he wished to clear up or to interrogate.

The letter to Monsieur Laffitte finished, he put it in his pocket as well as the pocket-book, and began his walk again.

The current of his thought had not changed. He still saw his duty clearly written in luminous letters which flared out before his eyes, and moved with his gaze: *"Go! avow thy name! denounce thyself!"*

At another moment, the idea occurred to him that, if he should denounce himself, perhaps the heroism of his action, and his honest life for the past seven years, and what he had done for the country, would be considered, and he would be pardoned.

But this supposition quickly vanished, and he smiled bitterly at the thought, that the robbery of the forty sous from Petit Gervais made him a second offender, that the matter would certainly reappear, and by the precise terms of the law he would be condemned to hard labour for life.

His blood rushed violently to his temples. He walked back and forth constantly. Midnight was struck first from the parish church, then from the city hall. He counted the twelve strokes of the two clocks, and he compared the sound of the two bells. It reminded him that, a few days before, he had seen at a junkshop an old bell for sale, upon which was this name: *Antoine Albin de Romainville.*

He was cold. He kindled a fire. He did not think to close the window.

Meanwhile he had fallen into his stupor again. It required not a little effort to recall his mind to what he was thinking of before the clocks struck. He succeeded at last.

"Ah! yes," said he, "I had formed the resolution to denounce myself."

Denounce himself, great God! Give himself up! He saw with infinite despair all that he must leave, all that he must resume. He must then bid farewell to this existence, so good, so pure, so radiant; to this respect of all, to honour, to liberty! No more would he go out to walk in the fields, never again would he hear the birds singing in the month of May, never more give alms to the little children! No longer would he feel the sweetness of looks of gratitude and of love! He would leave this house that he had built, this little room! Everything appeared charming to him now. He would read no more in these books, he would write no more on this little white wood table! His old portress, the only servant he had, would no longer bring him his coffee in the morning. Great God! instead of that, the galley-crew, the iron collar, the red blouse, the chain at his foot, fatigue, the dungeon, the plank-bed, all these horrors, which he knew so well! At his age, after having been what he was! If he were still young! But so old, to be insulted by the first comer, to be tumbled about by the prison guard, to be struck by the jailor's stick! To have his bare feet in iron-bound shoes! To submit morning and evening his leg to the hammer of the roundsman who tests the fetters! To endure the curiosity of strangers who would be told: *This one is the famous Jean Valjean, who was Mayor of M—— sur M——!* At night, dripping with sweat, overwhelmed with weariness, the green cap over his eyes, to mount two by two, under the sergeant's whip, the step-ladder of the floating prison. Oh, what wretchedness! Can destiny then be malignant like an intelligent being, and become monstrous like the human heart?

FORMS ASSUMED BY SUFFERING DURING SLEEP

THE clock struck three. For five hours he had been walking thus, almost without interruption, when he dropped into his chair.

He fell asleep and dreamed.

He awoke. He was chilly. A wind as cold as the morning wind made the sashes of the still open window swing on their hinges. The fire had gone out. The candle was low in the socket. The night was yet dark.

He arose and went to the window. There were still no stars in the sky.

From his window he could look into the court-yard and into the street. A harsh, rattling noise that suddenly resounded from the ground made him look down.

He saw below him two red stars, whose rays danced back and forth grotesquely in the shadow.

His mind was still half buried in the mist of his reverie: "Yes!" thought he, "there are none in the sky. They are on the earth now."

This confusion, however, faded away; a second noise like the first awakened him completely; he looked, and he saw that these two stars were the lamps of a carriage. By the light which they emitted, he could distinguish the form of a carriage. It was a tilbury drawn by a small white horse. The noise which he had heard was the sound of the horse's hoofs upon the pavement.

"What carriage is that?" said he to himself. "Who is it that comes so early?"

At that moment there was a low rap at the door of his room.

He shuddered from head to foot and cried in a terrible voice:

"Who is there?"

Some one answered:

"I, Monsieur Mayor."

He recognised the voice of the old woman, his portress.

"Well," said he, "what is it?"

"Monsieur Mayor, it is just five o'clock."

"What is that to me?"

"Monsieur Mayor, it is the chaise."

"What chaise?"

"The tilbury."

"What tilbury?"

"Did not Monsieur the Mayor order a tilbury?"

"No," said he.

"The driver says that he has come for Monsieur the Mayor."

"What driver?"

"Monsieur Scaufflaire's driver."

"Monsieur Scaufflaire?"

That name startled him as if a flash had passed before his face.

"Oh, yes!' he said, "Monsieur Scaufflaire!"

Could the old woman have seen him at that moment she would have been frightened.

There was a long silence. He examined the flame of the candle with a stupid air, and took some of the melted wax from around the wick and rolled it in his fingers. The old woman was waiting. She ventured, however, to speak again:

"Monsieur Mayor, what shall I say?"

"Say that it is right, and I am coming down."

CLOGS IN THE WHEELS

The postal service from Arras to M—— sur M—— was still performed at this time by the little mail waggons of the date of the empire. These mail waggons were two-wheeled cabriolets, lined with buckskin, hung upon jointed springs, and having but two seats, one for the driver, the other for the traveller. The wheels were armed with those long threatening hubs which keep other vehicles at a distance, and which are still seen upon the roads of Germany. The letters were carried in a huge oblong box placed behind the cabriolet and making a part of it. This box was painted black and the cabriolet yellow.

These vehicles, which nothing now resembles, were indescribably misshapen and clumsy, and when they were seen from a distance crawling along some road in the horizon, they were like those insects called, I think, termites, which with a slender body draw a great train behind. They went, however, very fast. The mail that left Arras every night at one o'clock, after the passing of the courier from Paris, arrived at M—— sur M—— a little before five in the morning.

That night the mail that came down to M—— sur M—— by the road from Hesdin, at the turn of a street just as it was entering the city, ran against a little tilbury drawn by a white horse, which was going in the opposite direction, and in which there was only one person, a man wrapped in a cloak. The wheel of the tilbury received a very severe blow. The courier cried out to the man to stop, but the traveller did not listen and kept on his way at a rapid trot.

"There is a man in a devilish hurry!" said the courier.

The man who was in such a hurry was he whom we have seen struggling in such pitiable convulsions.

Where was he going? He could not have told. Why was he in haste? He did not know. He went forward at haphazard. Whither? To Arras, doubtless; but perhaps he was going elsewhere also. At moments he felt this, and he shuddered. He plunged into that darkness as into a yawning gulf. Something pushed him, something drew him on. What was passing within him, no one could describe, all will understand. What man has not entered, at least once in his life, into this dark cavern of the unknown?

At daybreak he was in the open country; the city of M—— sur M—— was a long way behind. He saw the horizon growing lighter; he beheld, without seeing them, all the frozen figures of a winter dawn pass before his eyes. Morning has its spectres as well as evening. He did not see them, but, without his consciousness, and by a kind of penetration which was almost physical, those black outlines of trees and hills added to the tumultuous state of his soul in indescribable gloom and apprehension.

Every time he passed one of the isolated houses that stood here and there by the side of the road, he said to himself: "But yet, there are people who are sleeping!"

The trotting of the horse, the rattling of the harness, the wheels upon the pavement, made a gentle, monotonous sound. These things are charming when one is joyful, and mournful when one is sad.

It was broad day when he arrived at Hesdin. He stopped before an inn to let his horse breathe and to have some oats given him.

This horse was, as Scaufflaire had said, of that small breed of the Boulonnais which has too much head, too much belly, and not enough neck, but which has an open chest, a large rump, fine and slender legs, and a firm foot; a homely race, but strong and sound. The excellent animal had made five leagues in two hours, and had not turned a hair.

THE TRAVELLER ARRIVES AND PROVIDES FOR HIS RETURN

It was nearly eight o'clock in the evening when the carriole drove into the yard of the Hotel de la Poste at Arras. The man whom we have followed thus far, got out, answered the hospitalities of the inn's people with an absent-minded air, then he opened the door of a billiard-room on the first floor, took a seat, and leaned his elbows on the table.

The landlady entered.

"Will monsieur have a bed? will monsieur have supper?"

He shook his head.

"The stable-boy says that monsieur's horse is very tired!"

Here he broke silence.

"Is not the horse to start again to-morrow morning?"

"Oh! monsieur! he needs at least two days' rest."

He asked:

"Is not the Bureau of the Post here?"

"Yes, sir."

The hostess led him to the Bureau; he showed his passport and inquired if there were an opportunity to return that very night to M——

sur M—— by the mail coach; only one seat was vacant, that by the side of the driver; he retained it and paid for it. "Monsieur," said the booking clerk, "don't fail to be here ready to start at precisely one o'clock in the morning."

This done, he left the hotel and began to walk in the city.

He was not acquainted in Arras, the streets were dark, and he went haphazard. Nevertheless he seemed to refrain obstinately from asking his way. He crossed the little river Crinchon, and found himself in a labyrinth of narrow streets, where he was soon lost. A citizen came along with a lantern. After some hesitation, he determined to speak to this man, but not until he had looked before and behind, as if he were afraid that somebody might overhear the question he was about to ask.

"Monsieur," said he, "the court house, if you please?"

"You are not a resident of the city, monsieur," answered the citizen, who was an old man, "well, follow me, I am going right by the court house, that is to say, the city hall. For they are repairing the court house just now, and the courts are holding their sessions at the city hall, temporarily."

"Is it there," asked he, "that the assizes are held?"

"Certainly, monsieur; you see, what is the city hall to-day was the bishop's palace before the revolution. Monsieur de Conzié, who was bishop in 'eighty-two, had a large hall built. The court is held in that hall."

As they walked along, the citizen said to him:

"If monsieur wishes to see a trial, he is rather late. Ordinarily the sessions close at six o'clock."

However, when they reached the great square, the citizen showed him four long lighted windows on the front of a vast dark building.

"Faith, monsieur, you are in time, you are fortunate. Do you see those four windows? that is the court of assizes. There is a light there. Then they have not finished. The case must have been prolonged and they are having an evening session. Are you interested in this case? Is it a criminal trial? Are you a witness?"

He answered:

"I have no business; I only wish to speak to a lawyer."

"That's another thing," said the citizen. "Stop, monsieur, here is the door. The doorkeeper is up there. You have only to go up the grand stairway."

He followed the citizen's instructions, and in a few minutes found himself in a hall where there were many people, and scattered groups of lawyers in their robes whispering here and there.

An officer stood near the door which opened into the court-room. He asked this officer:

"Monsieur, will the door be opened soon?"

"It will not be opened," said the officer.

"How! it will not be opened when the session is resumed? is there not a recess?"

"The session has just been resumed," answered the officer, "but the door will not be opened again."

"Why not?"

"Because the hall is full."

"What! there are no more seats?"

"Not a single one. The door is closed. No one can enter."

The officer added, after a silence: "There are indeed two or three places still behind Monsieur the Judge, but Monsieur the Judge admits none but public functionaries to them."

So saying, the officer turned his back.

He retired with his head bowed down, crossed the ante-chamber, and walked slowly down the staircase, seeming to hesitate at every step. It is probable that he was holding counsel with himself. The violent combat that had been going on within him since the previous evening was not finished; and, every moment, he fell upon some new turn. When he reached the turn of the stairway, he leaned against the railing and folded his arms. Suddenly he opened his coat, drew out his pocket-book, took out a pencil, tore out a sheet, and wrote rapidly upon that sheet, by the glimmering light, this line: *Monsieur Madeleine, Mayor of M—— sur M——;* then he went up the stairs again rapidly, passed through the crowd, walked straight to the officer, handed him the paper, and said to him with authority: "Carry that to Monsieur the Judge."

The officer took the paper, cast his eye upon it, and obeyed.

ADMISSION BY FAVOUR

The Judge of the Royal Court of Douai, who was holding this term of the assizes at Arras, was familiar, as well as everybody else, with this name so profoundly and so universally honoured. When the officer, quietly opening the door which led from the counsel chamber to the court room, bent behind the judge's chair and handed him the paper, on which was written the line we have just read, adding: *"This gentleman desires to witness the trial,"* the judge made a hasty movement of deference, seized a pen, wrote a few words at the bottom of the paper and handed it back to the officer, saying to him: "Let him enter."

The unhappy man, whose history we are relating, had remained near the door of the hall, in the same place and the same attitude as when the officer had left him. He heard, through his thoughts, some one saying to him: "Will monsieur do me the honour to follow me?" It was the same officer who had turned his back upon him the minute before, and who now bowed to the earth before him. The officer at the same time handed him the paper. He unfolded it, and, as he happened to be near the lamp, he could read:

"The Judge of the Court of Assizes presents his respects to Monsieur Madeleine."

He crushed the paper in his hands, as if those few words had left some strange bitter taste behind.

He followed the officer.

In a few minutes he found himself alone in a kind of panelled cabinet, of a severe appearance, lighted by two wax candles placed upon a table covered with green cloth. The last words of the officer who had left him still rang in his ear: "Monsieur, you are now in the counsel chamber; you have but to turn the brass knob of that door and you will find yourself in the court room, behind the judge's chair." These words were associated in his thoughts with a vague remembrance of the narrow corridors and dark stairways through which he had just passed.

The officer had left him alone. The decisive moment had arrived. He endeavoured to collect his thoughts, but did not succeed. At those hours especially when we have sorest need of grasping the sharp realities of life do the threads of thought snap off in the brain. He was in the very place where the judges deliberate and decide. He beheld with a stupid tranquillity that silent and formidable room where so many existences had been terminated, where his own name would be heard so soon, and which his destiny was crossing at this moment. He looked at the walls, then he looked at himself, astonished that this could be this chamber, and that this could be he.

He had eaten nothing for more than twenty-four hours; he was bruised by the jolting of the carriole, but he did not feel it; it seemed to him that he felt nothing.

He examined a black frame which hung on the wall, and which contained under glass an old autograph letter of Jean Nicolas Pache, Mayor of Paris, and Minister, dated, doubtless by mistake, *June* 9th, year II., in which Pache sent to the Commune the list of the ministers and deputies held in arrest within their limits. A spectator, had he seen and watched him then, would have imagined, doubtless, that this letter appeared very remarkable to him, for he did not take his eyes off from it, and he read it two or three times. He was reading without paying any attention, and without knowing what he was doing. He was thinking of Fantine and Cosette.

Even while musing, he turned unconsciously, and his eyes encountered the brass knob of the door which separated him from the hall of the assizes. He had almost forgotten that door. His countenance, at first calm, now fell. His eyes were fixed on that brass knob, then became set and wild and little by little filled with dismay. Drops of sweat started out from his head, and rolled down over his temples.

At one moment he made, with a kind of authority united to rebellion, that indescribable gesture which means and which so well says: *Well! who is there to compel me?* Then he turned quickly, saw before him the door by which he had entered, went to it, opened it, and went out. He was no longer in that room; he was outside, in a corridor, a long, narrow corridor, cut up with steps and side-doors, making all sorts of angles, lighted here and there by lamps hung on the wall similar to nurse-lamps for the sick; it was the corridor by which he had come. He drew breath and listened; no sound behind him, no sound before him; he ran as if he were pursued.

When he had doubled several of the turns of this passage, he listened again. There was still the same silence and the same shadow about him. He was out of breath, he tottered, he leaned against the wall. The stone was cold; the sweat was icy upon his forehead; he roused himself with a shudder.

Then and there, alone, standing in that obscurity, trembling with cold and, perhaps, with something else, he reflected.

He had reflected all night, he had reflected all day; he now heard but one voice within him, which said: "Alas!"

A quarter of an hour thus rolled away. Finally, he bowed his head, sighed with anguish, let his arms fall, and retraced his steps. He walked slowly and as if overwhelmed. It seemed as if he had been caught in his flight and brought back.

He entered the counsel chamber again. The first thing that he saw was the handle of the door. That handle, round and of polished brass, shone out before him like an ominous star. He looked at it as a lamb might look at the eye of a tiger.

His eyes could not move from it.

From time to time, he took another step towards the door.

Had he listened, he would have heard, as a kind of confused murmur, the noise of the neighbouring hall; but he did not listen and he did not hear.

Suddenly, without himself knowing how, he found himself near the door, he seized the knob convulsively; the door opened.

He was in the court room.

A PLACE FOR ARRIVING AT CONVICTIONS

He took a step, closed the door behind him, mechanically, and remained standing, noting what he saw.

It was a large hall, dimly lighted, and noisy and silent by turns, where all the machinery of a criminal trial was exhibited, with its petty, yet solemn gravity, before the multitude.

At one end of the hall, that at which he found himself, heedless judges, in threadbare robes, were biting their finger-nails, or closing their eyelids; at the other end was a ragged rabble; there were lawyers in all sorts of attitudes; soldiers with honest and hard faces; old, stained wainscoting, a dirty ceiling, tables covered with serge, which was more nearly yellow than green; doors blackened by finger-marks; tavern lamps, giving more smoke than light, on nails in the panelling; candles, in brass candlesticks, on the tables; everywhere obscurity, unsightliness, and gloom; and from all this there arose an austere and august impression; for men felt therein the presence of that great human thing which is called law, and that great divine thing which is called justice.

No man in this multitude paid any attention to him. All eyes converged on a single point, a wooden bench placed against a little door, along the wall at the left hand of the judge. Upon this bench, which was lighted by several candles, was a man between two gendarmes.

This was the man.

He did not look for him, he saw him. His eyes went towards him naturally, as if they had known in advance where he was.

He thought he saw himself, older, doubtless, not precisely the same in features, but alike in attitude and appearance. with that bristling hair, with those wild and restless eyeballs, with that blouse—just as he was on the day he entered D——, full of hatred, and concealing in his soul that hideous hoard of frightful thoughts which he had spent nineteen years in gathering upon the floor of the galleys.

He said to himself, with a shudder: "Great God! shall I again come to this?"

This being appeared at least sixty years old. There was something indescribably rough, stupid, and terrified in his appearance.

At the sound of the door, people had stood aside to make room. The judge had turned his head, and supposing the person who entered to be the mayor of M—— sur M——, greeted him with a bow. The prosecuting attorney, who had seen Madeleine at M—— sur M——, whither he had been called more than once by the duties of his office, recognised him and bowed likewise. He scarcely perceived them. He gazed about him, a prey to a sort of hallucination.

Judges, clerk, gendarmes, a throng of heads, cruelly curious—he had seen all these once before, twenty-seven years ago. He had fallen again upon these fearful things; they were before him, they moved, they had being; it was no longer an effort of his memory, a mirage of his fancy, but real gendarmes and real judges, a real throng, and real men of flesh and bone. It was done; he saw reappearing and living again around him, with all the frightfulness of reality, the monstrous visions of the past.

All this was yawning before him.

Stricken with horror, he closed his eyes, and exclaimed from the depths of his soul: "Never!"

And by a tragic sport of destiny, which was agitating all his ideas and rendering him almost insane, it was another self before him. This man on trial was called by all around him, Jean Valjean!

He had before his eyes an unheard-of vision, a sort of representation of the most horrible moment of his life, played by his shadow.

All, everything was there—the same paraphernalia, the same hour of the night—almost the same faces, judge and assistant judges, soldiers and spectators. But above the head of the judge was a crucifix, a thing which did not appear in court rooms at the time of his sentence. When he was tried, God was not there.

A chair was behind him; he sank into it, terrified at the idea that he might be observed. When seated, he took advantage of a pile of papers on the judges' desk to hide his face from the whole room. He could now see without being seen. He entered fully into the spirit of the reality; by degrees he recovered his composure, and arrived at that degree of calmness at which it is possible to listen.

He looked for Javert, but did not see him. The witnesses' seat was hidden from him by the clerk's table. And then, as we have just said, the hall was very dimly lighted.

THE SYSTEM OF DENEGATIONS

The prosecuting attorney was still standing; he addressed the judge:

"Sir, in the presence of the confused but very adroit denegations of the accused, who endeavours to pass for an idiot, but who will not succeed in it—we will prevent him—we request that it may please you and the court to call again within the bar, the convicts, Brevet, Cochepaille, and Chenildieu, and the police-inspector Javert, and to submit them to a final interrogation, concerning the identity of the accused with the convict Jean Valjean."

"I must remind the prosecuting attorney," said the presiding judge, "that police-inspector Javert, recalled by his duties to the chief town of a neighbouring district, left the hall, and the city also, as soon as his testimony was taken. We granted him this permission, with the consent of the prosecuting attorney and the counsel of the accused."

"True," replied the prosecuting attorney; "in the absence of Monsieur Javert, I think it is a duty to recall to the gentlemen of the jury what he said here a few hours ago. Javert is an estimable man, who does honour to inferior but important functions, by his rigorous and strict probity. These are the terms in which he testified: 'I do not need even moral presumptions and material proofs to contradict the denials of the accused. I recognise him perfectly. This man's name is not Champmathieu; he is a convict, Jean Valjean, very hard, and much feared. He was liberated at the expiration of his term, but with extreme regret. He served out nineteen years at hard labour for burglary; five or six times he attempted to escape. Besides the Petit Gervais and Pierron robberies, I suspect him also of a robbery committed on his highness, the late Bishop of D—. I often saw him when I was adjutant of the galley guard at Toulon. I repeat it; I recognise him perfectly.' "

This declaration, in terms so precise, appeared to produce a strong impression upon the public and jury. The prosecuting attorney concluded by insisting that, in the absence of Javert, the three witnesses, Brevet, Chenildieu, and Cochepaille, should be heard anew and solemnly interrogated.

The judge gave an order to an officer, and a moment afterwards the door of the witness-room opened, and the officer, accompanied by a gendarme ready to lend assistance, led in the convict Brevet. The audience was in breathless suspense, and all hearts palpitated as if they contained but a single soul.

The old convict Brevet was clad in the black and grey jacket of the central prisons. Brevet was about sixty years old; he had the face of a man of business, and the air of a rogue. They sometimes go together He had become something like a turnkey in the prison to which he had been brought by new misdeeds. He was one of those men of whom their superiors are wont to say, "He tries to make himself useful." The chaplain bore good testimony to his religious habits. It must not be forgotten that this happened under the Restoration.

"Brevet," said the judge, "you have suffered infamous punishment, and cannot take an oath."

Brevet cast down his eyes.

"Nevertheless," continued the judge, "even in the man whom the law has degraded there may remain, if divine justice permit, a sentiment of honour and equity. To that sentiment I appeal in this decisive hour. If it still exist in you, as I hope, reflect before you answer me; consider on the one hand this man, whom a word from you may destroy; on the other hand, justice, which a word from you may enlighten. The moment is a solemn one, and there is still time to retract if you think yourself mistaken. Prisoner, rise. Brevet, look well upon the prisoner; collect your remembrances, and say, on your soul and conscience, whether you still recognise this man as your former comrade in the galleys, Jean Valjean."

Brevet looked at the prisoner, then turned again to the court.

"Yes, your honour, I was the first to recognise him, and still do so. This man is Jean Valjean, who came to Toulon in 1796, and left in 1815. I left a year after. He looks like a brute now, but he must have grown stupid with age; at the galleys he was sullen. I recognise him now, positively."

"Sit down," said the judge. "Prisoner, remain standing."

Chenildieu was brought in, a convict for life, as was shown by his red cloak and green cap. He was undergoing his punishment in the galleys of Toulon, whence he had been brought for this occasion. He was a little man, about fifty years old, active, wrinkled, lean, yellow, brazen, restless, with a sort of sickly feebleness in his limbs and whole person, and immense force in his eye. His companions in the galleys had nicknamed him Je-nie-Dieu.

The judge addressed nearly the same words to him as to Brevet. When he reminded him that his infamy had deprived him of the right to take an oath, Chenildieu raised his head and looked the spectators in the face. The judge requested him to collect his thoughts, and asked him, as he had Brevet, whether he still recognised the prisoner.

Chenildieu burst out laughing.

"Gad! do I recognise him! we were five years on the same chain. You're sulky with me, are you, old boy?"

"Sit down," said the judge.

The officer brought in Cochepaille; this other convict for life, brought from the galleys and dressed in red like Chenildieu, was a peasant from Lourdes, and a semi-bear of the Pyrenees. He had tended flocks in the mountains, and from shepherd had glided into brigandage. Cochepaille was not less uncouth than the accused, and appeared still more stupid. He was one of these unfortunate men whom nature turns out as wild beasts, and society finishes up into galley slaves.

The judge attempted to move him by a few serious and pathetic words, and asked him, as he had the others, whether he still recognised without hesitation or difficulty the man standing before him.

"It is Jean Valjean," said Cochepaille. "The same they called Jean-the-Jack, he was so strong."

Each of the affirmations of these three men, evidently sincere and in good faith, had excited in the audience a murmur of evil augury for the accused—a murmur which increased in force and continuance, every time a new declaration was added to the preceding one. The prisoner himself listened to them with that astonished countenance which, according to the prosecution, was his principal means of defence. At the first, the gendarmes by his side heard him mutter between his teeth: "Ah, well! there is one of them!" After the second, he said in a louder tone, with an air almost of satisfaction, "Good!" At the third, he exclaimed, "Famous!"

The judge addressed him:

"Prisoner, you have listened. What have you to say?"

He replied:

"I say—famous!"

A buzz ran through the crowd and almost invaded the jury. It was evident that the man was lost.

"Officers," said the judge, "enforce order. I am about to sum up the case."

At this moment there was a movement near the judge. A voice was heard exclaiming:

"Brevet, Chenildieu, Cochepaille, look this way!"

So lamentable and terrible was this voice that those who heard it felt their blood run cold. All eyes turned towards the spot whence it came. A man, who had been sitting among the privileged spectators behind the court, had risen, pushed open the low door which separated the tribunal from the bar, and was standing in the centre of the hall. The judge, the prosecuting attorney, twenty persons recognized him, and exclaimed at once:

"Monsieur Madeleine!"

CHAMPMATHIEU MORE AND MORE ASTONISHED

It was he, indeed. The clerk's lamp lighted up his face. He held his hat in hand; there was no disorder in his dress; his overcoat was carefully buttoned. He was very pale, and trembled slightly. His hair, already grey when he came to Arras, was now perfectly white. It had become so during the time that he had been there. All eyes were strained towards him.

The sensation was indescribable. There was a moment of hesitation in the auditory. The voice had been so thrilling, the man standing there appeared so calm, that at first nobody could comprehend it. They asked who had cried out. They could not believe that this tranquil man had uttered that fearful cry.

This indecision lasted but few seconds. Before even the judge and prosecuting attorney could say a word, before the gendarmes and officers could make a sign, the man, whom all up to this moment called Monsieur Madeleine, had advanced towards the witnesses, Cochepaille, Brevet, and Chenildieu.

"Do you not recognise me?" said he.

All three stood confounded, and indicated by a shake of the head that they did not know him. Cochepaille, intimidated, gave the military salute. Monsieur Madeleine turned towards the jurors and court, and said in a mild voice:

"Gentlemen of the jury, release the accused. Your honour, order my arrest. He is not the man whom you seek; it is I. I am Jean Valjean."

Not a breath stirred. To the first commotion of astonishment had succeeded a sepulchral silence. That species of religious awe was felt in the hall which thrills the multitude at the accomplishment of a grand action.

Nevertheless, the face of the judge was marked with sympathy and sadness; he exchanged glances with the prosecuting attorney, and a few whispered words with the assistant judges. He turned to the spectators and asked in a tone which was understood by all:

"Is there a physician here?"

The prosecuting attorney continued:

"Gentlemen of the jury, the strange and unexpected incident which disturbs the audience, inspires us, as well as yourselves, with a feeling which we have no need to express. You all know, at least by reputation, the honourable Monsieur Madeleine, Mayor of M—— sur M——. If there be a physician in the audience, we unite with his honour the judge in entreating him to be kind enough to lend his assistance to Monsieur Madeleine and conduct him to his residence."

Monsieur Madeleine did not permit the prosecuting attorney to finish, but interrupted him with a tone full of gentleness and authority. These are the words he uttered; we give them literally, as they were written down immediately after the trial, by one of the witnesses of the scene—as they still ring in the ears of those who heard them, now nearly forty years ago.

"I thank you, Monsieur Prosecuting Attorney, but I am not mad. You shall see. You were on the point of committing a great mistake; release that man. I am accomplishing a duty; I am the unhappy convict. I am the only one who sees clearly here, and I tell you the truth. What I do at this moment, God beholds from on high, and that is sufficient. You can take me, since I am here. Nevertheless, I have done my best. I have disguised myself under another name, I have become rich, I have become a mayor, I have desired to enter again among honest men. It seems that this cannot be. In short, there are many things which I cannot tell. I shall not relate to you the story of my life: some day you will know it. I did rob Monsiegneur the Bishop—that is true; I did rob Petit Gervais—that is true. They were right in telling you that Jean Valjean was a wicked wretch. But all the blame may not belong to him. Listen, your honours; a man so abased as I, has no remonstrance to make with Providence, nor advice to give to society; but, mark you, the infamy from which I have sought to rise is pernicious to men. The galleys make the galley-slave. Receive this in kindness, if you will. Before the galleys, I was a poor peasant, unintelligent, a species of idiot; the galleys changed me. I was stupid, I became wicked; I was a log, I became a firebrand. Later, I was saved by indulgence and kindness, as I had been lost by severity. But pardon, you cannot comprehend what I say. I have nothing more to add. Take me. Great God! the prosecuting attorney shakes his head. You say 'Monsieur Madeleine has gone mad;' you do not believe me. This is hard to be borne. Do not condemn that man, at least. What! these men do not know me! Would that Javert were here. He would recognise me!"

Nothing could express the kindly yet terrible melancholy of the tone which accompanied these words.

He turned to the three convicts:

"Well! I recognize you, Brevet, do you remember—"

He paused, hesitated a moment, and said:

"Do you remember those checkered, knit suspenders that you had in the galleys?"

Brevet started as if struck with surprise, and gazed wildly at him from head to foot. He continued:

"Chenildieu, surnamed by yourself Je-nie-Dieu, the whole of your left shoulder has been burned deeply, from laying it one day on a chafing dish full of embers, to efface the three letters T. F. P., which yet are still to be seen there. Answer me, is this true?"

"It is true!" said Chenildieu.

He turned to Cochepaille:

"Cochepaille, you have on your left arm, near where you have been bled, a date put in blue letters with burnt powder. It is the date of the landing of the emperor at Cannes, *March 1st,* 1815. Lift up your sleeve."

Cochepaille lifted up his sleeve; all eyes around him were turned to his naked arm. A gendarme brought a lamp; the date was there.

The unhappy man turned towards the audience and the court with a smile, the thought of which still rends the hearts of those who witnessed it. It was the smile of triumph; it was also the smile of despair.

"You see clearly," said he, "that I am Jean Valjean."

There were no longer either judges, or accusers, or gendarmes in the hall; there were only fixed eyes and beating hearts. Nobody remembered longer the part which he had to play; the prosecuting attorney forgot that he was there to prosecute, the judge that he was there to preside, the counsel for the defence that he was there to defend. Strange to say no question was put, no authority intervened. It is the peculiarity of sublime spectacles that they take possession of every soul, and make of every witness a spectator. Nobody, perhaps, was positively conscious of what he experienced; and, undoubtedly, nobody said to himself that he there beheld the effulgence of a great light, yet all felt dazzled at heart.

It was evident that Jean Valjean was before their eyes. That fact shone forth. The appearance of this man had been enough fully to clear up the case, so obscure a moment before. Without need of any further explanation, the multitude, as by a sort of electric revelation, comprehended instantly, and at a single glance, this simple and magnificent story of a man giving himself up that another might not be condemned in his place. The details, the hesitation, the slight reluctance possible were lost in this immense, luminous fact.

It was an impression which quickly passed over, but for the moment it was irresistible.

"I will not disturb the proceeding further," continued Jean Valjean. "I am going, since I am not arrested. I have many things to do. Monsieur the prosecuting attorney knows where I am going, and will have me arrested when he chooses."

He walked towards the outer door. Not a voice was raised, not an arm stretched out to prevent him. All stood aside. There was at that moment an indescribable divinity within him which makes the multitudes fall back and make way before a man. He passed through the throng with slow steps. It was never known who opened the door, but it is certain that the door was open when he came to it. On reaching it he turned and said:

"Monsieur the Prosecuting Attorney, I remain at your disposal."

He then addressed himself to the auditory.

"You all, all who are here, think me worthy of pity, do you not? Great God, when I think of what I have been on the point of doing, I think myself worthy of envy. Still, would that all this had not happened!"

He went out, the door closed as it had opened, for those who do deeds sovereignly great are always sure of being served by somebody in the multitude.

Less than an hour afterwards, the verdict of the jury discharged from all accusation the said Champmathieu; and Champmathieu, set at liberty, forthwith went his way stupefied, thinking all men mad, and understanding nothing of this vision.

BOOK VI—COUNTER-STROKE

IN WHAT MIRROR M. MADELEINE LOOKS AT HIS HAIR

Day began to dawn. Fantine had had a feverish and sleepless night, yet full of happy visions; she fell asleep at daybreak. Sister Simplice, who had watched with her, took advantage of this slumber to go and prepare a new potion of quinine. The good sister had been for a few moments in the laboratory of the infirmary, bending over her vials and drugs, looking at them very closely on account of the mist which the dawn casts over all objects, when suddenly she turned her head, and uttered a faint cry. M. Madeleine stood before her. He had just come in silently.

"You, Monsieur the Mayor!" she exclaimed.

"How is the poor woman?" He answered in a low voice.

"Better just now. But we have been very anxious indeed."

She explained what had happened, that Fantine had been very ill the night before, but was now better, because she believed that the mayor had gone to Montfermeil for her child. The sister dared not question the mayor, but she saw clearly from his manner that he had not come from that place.

"That is well," said he. "You did right not to deceive her."

"Yes," returned the sister, "but now, Monsieur the Mayor, when she sees you without her child, what shall we tell her?"

He reflected a moment, then said:

"God will inspire us."

"But, we cannot tell her a lie," murmured the sister, in a smothered tone.

The broad daylight streamed into the room, and lighted up the face of M. Madeleine.

The sister happened to raise her eyes.

"O God, monsieur," she exclaimed. "What has befallen you? Your hair is all white!"

"White!" said he.

Sister Simplice had no mirror; she rummaged in a case of instruments, and found a little glass which the physician of the infirmary used to discover whether the breath had left the body of a patient. M. Madeleine took the glass, looked at his hair in it, and said, "Indeed!"

He spoke the word with indifference, as if thinking of something else.

The sister felt chilled by an unknown something, of which she caught a glimpse in all this.

He asked: "Can I see her?"

"Will not Monsieur the Mayor bring back her child?" asked the sister, scarcely daring to venture a question.

"Certainly, but two or three days are necessary."

"If she does not see Monsieur the Mayor here," continued the sister timidly, "she will not know that he has returned; it will be easy for her to have patience, and when the child comes, she will think naturally that Monsieur the Mayor has just arrived with her. Then we will not have to tell her a falsehood."

Monsieur Madeleine seemed to reflect for a few moments, then said with his calm gravity:

"No, my sister, I must see her. Perhaps I have not much time."

The nun did not seem to notice this "perhaps," which gave an obscure and singular significance to the words of Monsieur the Mayor. She answered, lowering her eyes and voice respectfully:

"In that case, she is asleep, but monsieur can go in."

The sister did not enter with him. He stood by the bed, with his finger on his lips, as if there were some one in the room to silence. Fantine opened her eyes, saw him, and said tranquilly, with a smile:

"And Cosette?"

FANTINE HAPPY

She did not start with joy; she was joy itself. The simple question: "And Cosette?" was asked with such deep faith, with so much certainty, with so complete an absence of disquiet or doubt, that he could find no word in reply. She continued:

"I knew you were there; I was asleep, but I saw you. I have seen you for a long time; I have followed you with my eyes the whole night. You were in a halo of glory, and all manner of celestial forms were hovering around you!"

He raised his eyes towards the crucifix.

"But tell me, where is Cosette?" she resumed. "Why not put her on my bed that I might see her the instant I woke?"

He answered something mechanically, which he could never afterwards recall.

Happily, the physician had come and had been apprised of this. He came to the rescue of M. Madeleine.

"My child," said he, "be calm, your daughter is here."

The eyes of Fantine beamed with joy, and lighted up her whole countenance. She clasped her hands with an expression full of the most violent and most gentle entreaty:

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "bring her to me!"

Touching illusion of the mother; Cosette was still to her a little child to be carried in the arms.

"Not yet, cautioned the physician, "not at this moment. You have some fever still. The sight of your child will agitate you, and make you worse. We must cure you first."

She interrupted him impetuously.

"But I am cured! I tell you I am cured! Is this physician a fool? I will see my child."

"You see how you are carried away!" said the physician. "So long as you are in this state, I cannot let you have your child. It is not enough to see her, you must live for her. When you are reasonable, I will bring her to you myself."

The poor mother bowed her head.

"Sir, I ask your pardon. I sincerely ask your pardon. Once I would not have spoken as I have now, but so many misfortunes have befallen me that sometimes I do not know what I am saying. I understand, you fear excitement; I will wait as long as you wish, but I am sure that it will not harm me to see my daughter. I see her now, I have not taken my eyes from her since last night. Let them bring her to me now, and I will just speak to her very gently. That is all. Is it not very natural that I should wish to see my child, when they have been to Montfermeil on purpose to bring her to me? I am not angry. I know that I am going to be very happy. All night, I saw figures in white, smiling on me. As soon as the doctor pleases, he can bring Cosette. My fever is gone, for I am cured; I feel that there is scarcely anything the matter with me; but I will act as if I were ill, and do not stir so as to please the ladies here. When they see that I am calm, they will say: 'You must give her the child.'"

M. Madeleine was sitting in a chair by the side of the bed. She turned towards him, and made visible efforts to appear calm and "very good," as she said, in that weakness of disease which resembles childhood, so that, seeing her so peaceful, there should be no objection to bringing her Cosette. Nevertheless, although restraining herself, she could not help addressing a thousand questions to M. Madeleine.

"Did you have a pleasant journey, Monsieur the Mayor? Oh! how good you have been to go for her! Tell me only how she is! Did she bear the journey well? Ah! she will not know me. In all this time, she has forgotten me, poor kitten! Children have no memory. They are like birds. To-day they see one thing, and to-morrow another, and remember nothing. Tell me only, were her clothes clean? Did those Thenardiers keep her neat? How did they feed her? Oh, if you knew how I have suffered in asking myself all these things in the time of my wretchedness! Now, it is past. I am happy. Oh! how I want to see her! Monsieur the Mayor, did you think her pretty? Is not my daughter beautiful? You must have been very cold in the diligence? Could they not bring her here for one little moment? They might take her away immediately. Say! you are master here, are you willing?"

He took her hand. "Cosette is beautiful," said he. "Cosette is well; you shall see her soon, but be quiet. You talk too fast; and then you throw your arms out of bed, which makes you cough."

In fact, coughing fits interrupted Fantine at almost every word. She did not murmur; she feared that by too eager entreaties she had weakened the confidence which she wished to inspire, and began to talk about indifferent subjects.

"Montfermeil is a pretty place, is it not? In summer people go there on pleasure parties. Do the Thenardiers do a good business? Not many great people pass through that country. Their inn is a kind of chop-house."

Monsieur Madeleine still held her hand and looked at her with anxiety. It was evident that he had come to tell her things before which his mind now hesitated. The physician had made his visit and retired. Sister Simplice alone remained with them.

But in the midst of the silence, Fantine cried out:—

"I hear her! Oh, darling! I hear her!"

There was a child playing in the court—the child of the portress or some workwoman. It was one of those chances which are always met with, and which seem to make part of the mysterious representation of tragic events. The child, which was a little girl, was running up and down to keep herself warm, singing and laughing in a loud voice. Alas! with what are not the plays of children mingled! Fantine had heard this little girl singing.

"Oh!" said she, "it is my Cosette! I know her voice!"

The child departed as she had come, and the voice died away. Fantine listened for some time. A shadow came over her face, and Monsieur Madeleine heard her whisper, "How wicked it is of that doctor not to let me see my child! That man has a bad face!"

But yet her happy train of thought returned. With her head on the pillow she continued to talk to herself. "How happy we shall be! We will have a little garden in the first place; Monsieur Madeleine has promised it to me. My child will play in the garden. She must know her letters now. I will teach her to spell. She will chase butterflies in the grass, and I will watch her. Then there will be her first communion. Ah! when will her first communion be?"

She began to count on her fingers.

"One, two, three, four. She is seven years old. In five years. She will have a white veil and open-worked stockings, and will look like a little lady. Oh, my good sister, you do not know how foolish I am; here I am thinking of my child's first communion!"

And she began to laugh.

He had let go the hand of Fantine. He listened to the words as one listens to the wind that blows, his eyes on the ground, and his mind plunged into unfathomable reflections. Suddenly she ceased speaking, and raised her head mechanically. Fantine had become appalling.

She did not speak; she did not breathe; she half-raised herself in the bed, the covering fell from her emaciated shoulders; her countenance, radiant a moment before, became livid, and her eyes, dilated with terror, seemed to fasten on something before her at the other end of the room.

"Good God!" exclaimed he. "What is the matter Fantine?"

She did not answer, she did not take her eyes from the object which she seemed to see, but touched his arm with one hand, and with the other made a sign to him to look behind him.

He turned, and saw Javert.

JAVERT SATISFIED

Let us see what has happened.

The half hour after midnight was striking when M. Madeleine left the hall of the Arras Assizes. He had returned to his inn just in time to take the mail-coach, in which it will be remembered he had retained his seat. A little before six in the morning he had reached M—— sur M——, where his first care had been to post a letter to M. Laffitte, then go to the infirmary and visit Fantine.

Meanwhile he had scarcely left the hall of the Court of Assizes when the prosecuting attorney, recovering from his first shock, addressed the court, deploring the insanity of the honourable Mayor of M—— sur M——, declaring that his convictions were in no wise modified by this singular incident, which would be explained hereafter, and demanding the conviction of this Champmathieu, who was evidently the real Jean Valjean. The persistence of the prosecuting attorney was visibly in contradiction to the sentiment of all—the public, the court, and the jury. The counsel for the defence had little difficulty in answering this harangue, and establishing that, in consequence of the revelations of M. Madeleine—that is, of the real Jean Valjean—the aspect of the case was changed, entirely changed, from top to bottom, and the jury now had before them an innocent man. The counsel drew from this a few passionate appeals, unfortunately not very new, in regard to judicial errors, etc., etc.; the judge, in his summing up, sided with the defence; and the jury, after a few moments' consultation, acquitted Champmathieu.

But yet the prosecuting attorney must have a Jean Valjean, and having lost Champmathieu he took Madeleine.

Immediately upon the discharge of Champmathieu the prosecuting attorney closeted himself with the judge. The subject of their conference was, "Of the necessity of the arrest of the person of Monsieur the Mayor of M——sur M——." This sentence, in which there is a great deal of *of,* is the prosecuting attorney's, written by his own hand, on the minutes of his report to the Attorney-general.

The first sensation being over, the judge made few objections. Justice must take its course. Then to confess the truth, although the judge was a kind man, and really intelligent, he was at the same time a strong, almost a zealous royalist, and had been shocked when the mayor of M—— sur M——, in speaking of the debarkation at Cannes, said the *Emperor,* instead of *Buonaparte.*

The order of arrest was therefore granted. The prosecuting attorney sent it to M—— sur M—— by a courier, at full speed, to police inspector Javert.

Javert was just rising when the courier brought him the warrant and order of arrest.

The courier was himself a policeman, and an intelligent man; who, in three words, acquainted Javert with what had happened at Arras.

The order of arrest, signed by the prosecuting attorney, was couched in these terms:—

"Inspector Javert will seize the body of Sieur Madeleine, Mayor of M—— sur M——, who has this day been identified in court as the discharged convict Jean Valjean."

One who did not know Javert, on seeing him as he entered the hall of the infirmary, could have divined nothing of what was going on, and would have thought his manner the most natural imaginable. He was cool, calm, grave; his grey hair lay perfectly smooth over his temples, and he ascended the stairway with his customary deliberation. But one who knew him thoroughly and examined him with attention, would have shuddered. The buckle of his leather cravat, instead of being on the back of his neck, was under his left ear. This denoted an unheard-of agitation.

Javert was a complete character, without a wrinkle in his duty or his uniform, methodical with villains, rigid with the buttons of his coat.

For him to misplace the buckle of his cravat, he must have received one of those shocks which may well be the earthquakes of the soul.

He came unostentatiously, had taken a corporal and four soldiers from a station-house near-by, had left the soldiers in the court, and had been shown to Fantine's chamber by the portress, without suspicion, accustomed as she was to see armed men asking for the mayor.

On reaching the room of Fantine, Javert turned the key, pushed open the door with the gentleness of a sick-nurse, or a police spy, and entered.

Properly speaking, he did not enter. He remained standing in the half-opened door, his hat on his head, and his left hand in his overcoat, which was buttoned to the chin. In the bend of his elbow might be seen the leaden head of his enormous cane, which disappeared behind him.

He remained thus for nearly a minute, unperceived. Suddenly, Fantine raised her eyes, saw him, and caused Monsieur Madeleine to turn around.

At the moment when the glance of Madeleine encountered that of Javert, Javert, without stirring, without moving, without approaching, became terrible. No human feeling can ever be so appalling as joy.

It was the face of a demon who had again found his victim.

AUTHORITY RESUMES ITS SWAY

Fantine had not seen Javert since the day the mayor had wrested her from him. Her sick brain accounted for nothing, only she was sure that he had come for her. She could not endure this hideous face, she felt as if she were dying, she hid her face with both hands, and shrieked in anguish:

"Monsieur Madeleine, save me!"

Jean Valjean, we shall call him by no other name henceforth, had risen. He said to Fantine in his gentlest and calmest tone:

"Be composed; it is not for you that he comes."

He then turned to Javert and said:

"I know what you want."

Javert answered:

"Hurry along."

There was in the manner in which these two words were uttered, an inexpressible something which reminded you of a wild beast and of a madman. Javert did not say "Hurry along!" he said: "Hurr-'long!" No orthography can express the tone in which this was pronounced; it ceased to be human speech; it was a howl.

He did not go through the usual ceremony; he made no words; he showed no warrant. To him Jean Valjean was a sort of mysterious and intangible antagonist, a shadowy wrestler with whom he had been struggling for five years, without being able to throw him. This arrest was not a beginning, but an end. He only said: "Hurry along!"

While speaking thus, he did not stir a step, but cast upon Jean Valjean a look like a noose, with which he was accustomed to draw the wretched to him by force.

It was the same look which Fantine had felt penetrate to the very marrow of her bones, two months before.

At the exclamation of Javert, Fantine had opened her eyes again. But the mayor was there, what could she fear?

Javert advanced to the middle of the chamber, exclaiming:

"Hey, there; are you coming?"

The unhappy woman looked around her. There was no one but the nun and the mayor. To whom could this contemptuous familiarity be addressed? To herself alone. She shuddered.

Then she saw a mysterious thing, so mysterious that its like had never appeared to her in the darkest delirium of fever.

She saw the spy Javert seize Monsieur the Mayor by the collar; she saw Monsieur the Mayor bow his head. The world seemed vanishing before her sight.

Javert, in fact, had taken Jean Valjean by the collar.

"Monsieur the Mayor!" cried Fantine.

Javert burst into a horrid laugh, displaying all his teeth.

"There is no Monsieur the Mayor here any longer!" said he.

Jean Valjean did not attempt to disturb the hand which grasped the collar of his coat. He said:

"Javert—"

"Javert interrupted him: "Call me Monsieur the Inspector!"

"Monsieur," continued Jean Valjean, "I would like to speak a word with you in private."

"Aloud, speak aloud," said Javert, "people speak aloud to me."

Jean Valjean went on, lowering his voice.

"It is a request that I have to make of you—"

"I tell you to speak aloud."

"But this should not be heard by any one but yourself."

"What is that to me? I will not listen."

Jean Valjean turned to him and said rapidly and in a very low tone:

"Give me three days! Three days to go for the child of this unhappy woman! I will pay whatever is necessary. You shall accompany me if you like."

"Are you laughing at me!" cried Javert. "Hey! I did not think you so stupid! You ask for three days to get away, and tell me that you are going for this girl's child! Ha, ha, that's good! That is good!"

Fantine shivered.

"My child!" she exclaimed, "going for my child! Then she is not here! Sister, tell me, where is Cosette? I want my child. Monsieur Madeleine, Monsieur the Mayor!"

Javert stamped his foot.

He gazed steadily at Fantine, and added, grasping anew the cravat, shirt, and coat collar of Jean Valjean:

"I tell you that there is no Monsieur Madeleine, and that there is no Monsieur the Mayor. There is a robber, there is a brigand, there is a convict called Jean Valjean, and I have got him! That is what there is!"

Fantine started upright, supporting herself by her rigid arms and hands; she looked at Jean Valjean, then at Javert, and then at the nun; she opened her mouth as if to speak; a rattle came from her throat, her teeth struck together, she stretched out her arms in anguish, convulsively opening her hands, and groping about her like one who is drowning; then sank suddenly back upon the pillow.

Her head struck the head of the bed and fell forward on her breast, the mouth gaping, the eyes open and glazed.

She was dead.

Jean Valjean put his hand on that of Javert which held him and opened it as he would have opened the hand of a child; then he said:

"You have killed this woman."

"Have done with this!" cried Javert, furious, "I am not here to listen to sermons; save all that; the guard is below; come right along, or the handcuffs!"

There stood in a corner of the room an old-iron bedstead in a dilapidated condition, which the sisters used as a camp-bed when they watched. Jean Valjean went to the bed, wrenched out the rickety head bar—a thing easy for muscles like his—in the twinkling of an eye, and with the bar in his clenched fist, looked at Javert. Javert recoiled towards the door.

Jean Valjean, his iron bar in hand, walked slowly towards the bed of Fantine. On reaching it, he turned and said to Javert in a voice that could scarcely be heard:

"I advise you not to disturb me now."

Nothing is more certain than that Javert trembled.

He had an idea of calling the guard, but Jean Valjean might profit by his absence to escape. He remained therefore, grasped the bottom of his cane, and leaned against the framework of the door without taking his eyes from Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean rested his elbow upon the post, and his head upon his hand, and gazed at Fantine, stretched motionless before him. He remained thus, mute and absorbed, evidently lost to everything of this life. His countenance and attitude bespoke nothing but inexpressible pity.

After a few moments' reverie, he bent down to Fantine, and addressed her in a whisper.

What did he say? What could this condemned man say to this dead woman? What were these words? They were heard by none on earth. Did the dead woman hear them? There are touching illusions which perhaps are sublime realities. One thing is beyond doubt; Sister Simplice, the only witness of what passed, has often related that, at the moment when Jean Valjean whispered in the ear of Fantine, she distinctly saw an ineffable smile beam on those pale lips and in those dim eyes, full of the wonder of the tomb.

Jean Valjean took Fantine's head in his hands and arranged it on the pillow, as a mother would have done for her child, then fastened the string of her night-dress, and replaced her hair beneath her cap. This done, he closed her eyes.

The face of Fantine, at this instant, seemed strangely illumined. Death is the entrance into the great light.

Fantine's hand hung over the side of the bed. Jean Valjean knelt before this hand, raised it gently, and kissed it.

Then he rose, and, turning to Javert, said:

"Now, I am at your disposal."

A FITTING TOMB

JAVERT put Jean Valjean in the city prison.

The arrest of Monsieur Madeleine produced a sensation, or rather an extraordinary commotion, at M—— sur M——. We are sorry not to be able to disguise the fact that, on this single sentence, *he was a galley slave,* almost everybody abandoned him. In less than two hours, all the good he had done was forgotten, and he was "nothing but a galley slave." It is just to say that the details of the scene at Arras were not yet known. All day long, conversations like this were heard in every part of the town: "Don't you know, he was a discharged convict!" "He! Who?" "The mayor." "Bah! Monsieur Madeleine." "Yes." "Indeed!" "His name was not Madeleine; he has a horrid name, Béjean, Bojean, Bonjean!" "Oh! bless me!" "He has been arrested." "Arrested!" "In prison, in the city prison to await his removal." "His removal! where will he be taken?" "To the Court of Assizes for a highway robbery that he once committed." "Well! I always did suspect him. The man was too good, too perfect, too sweet. He refused fees, and gave sous to every little blackguard he met. I always thought that there must be something bad at the bottom of all this."

"The drawing-rooms," above all, were entirely of this opinion.

An old lady, a subscriber to the *Drapeau Blanc,* made this remark, the depth of which it is almost impossible to fathom:

"I am not sorry for it. That will teach the Bonapartists!"

In this manner the phantom which had been called Monsieur

Madeleine was dissipated at M—— sur M——. Three or four persons alone in the whole city remained faithful to his memory. The old portress who had been his servant was among the number.

On the evening of this same day, the worthy old woman was sitting in her lodge, still bewildered and sunk in sad reflections. The factory had been closed all day, the carriage doors were bolted, the street was deserted. There was no one in the house but the two nuns, Sister Perpétue and Sister Simplice, who were watching the corpse of Fantine.

Towards the time when Monsieur Madeleine had been accustomed to return, the honest portress rose mechanically, took the key of his room from a drawer, with the taper-stand that he used at night to light himself up the stairs, then hung the key on a nail from which he had been in the habit of taking it, and placed the taper-stand by its side, as if she were expecting him. She then seated herself again in her chair, resumed her reflections. The poor old woman had done all this without being conscious of it.

More than two hours had elapsed when she started from her reverie and exclaimed, "Why, bless me! I have hung his key on the nail!"

Just then, the window of her box opened, a hand passed through the opening, took the key and stand, and lighted the taper at the candle which was burning.

The portress raised her eyes; she was transfixed with astonishment; a cry rose to her lips, but she could not give it utterance.

She knew the hand, the arm, the coat-sleeve.

It was M. Madeleine.

She was speechless for some seconds, thunderstruck, as she said herself, afterwards, in giving her account of the affair.

"My God! Monsieur Mayor!" she exclaimed, "I thought you were——"

She stopped; the end of her sentence would not have been respectful to the beginning. To her, Jean Valjean was still Monsieur the Mayor.

He completed her thought.

"In prison," said he. "I was there; I broke a bar from a window, let myself fall from the top of a roof, and here I am. I am going to my room; go for Sister Simplice. She is doubtless beside this poor woman."

The old servant hastily obeyed.

He gave her no caution, very sure she would guard him better than he would guard himself.

It has never been known how he had succeeded in gaining entrance into the court-yard without opening the carriage-door. He had, and always carried about him, a pass-key which opened a little side door, but he must have been searched, and this taken from him. This point is not yet cleared up.

He ascended the staircase which led to his room. On reaching the top, he left his taper stand on the upper stair, opened his door with little noise, felt his way to the window and closed the shutter, then came back, took his taper, and went into the chamber.

The precaution was not useless; it will be remembered that his window could be seen from the street.

He cast a glance about him, over his table, his chair, his bed, which had not been slept in for three days. There remained no trace of the disorder of the night before the last. The portress had "put the room to rights." He took from a wardrobe an old shirt which he tore into several pieces and in which he packed two silver candlesticks. In all this there was neither haste nor agitation. And even while packing the bishop's candlesticks, he was eating a piece of black bread. It was probably prison-bread, which he had brought away in escaping.

This has been established by crumbs of bread found on the floor of the room, when the court afterwards ordered a search.

Two gentle taps were heard at the door.

"Come in," said he.

It was Sister Simplice.

She was pale, her eyes were red, and the candle which she held trembled in her hand. The shocks of destiny have this peculiarity; however subdued or disciplined our feelings may be, they draw out the human nature from the depths of our souls, and compel us to exhibit it to others. In the agitation of this day the nun had again become a woman. She had wept, and she was trembling.

Jean Valjean had written a few lines on a piece of paper which he handed to the nun, saying: "Sister you will give this to the curé."

The paper was not folded. She cast her eyes on it.

"You may read it," said he.

She read: "I beg Monsieur the Curé to take charge of all that I leave here. He will please defray therefrom the expenses of my trial, and of the burial of the woman who died this morning. The remainder is for the poor."

The sister attempted to speak, but could scarcely stammer out a few inarticulate sounds. She succeeded, however, in saying:

"Does not Monsieur the Mayor wish to see this poor unfortunate again for the last time?"

"No," said he, "I am pursued; I should only be arrested in her chamber; it would disturb her."

He had scarcely finished when there was a loud noise on the staircase. They heard a tumult of steps ascending, and the old portress exclaiming in her loudest and most piercing tones:

"My good sir, I swear to you in the name of God, that nobody has come in here the whole day, and the whole evening; that I have not even once left my door!"

A man replied: But yet, there is a light in this room."

They recognised the voice of Javert.

The chamber was so arranged that the door in opening covered the corner of the wall to the right. Jean Valjean blew out the taper, and placed himself in this corner.

Sister Simplice fell on her knees near the table.

The door opened.

Javert entered.

The whispering of several men, and the protestations of the portress were heard in the hall.

The nun did not raise her eyes. She was praying.

The candle was on the mantel, and gave but a dim light.

Javert perceived the sister, and stopped abashed.

The very foundation of Javert, his element, the medium in which he breathed, was veneration for all authority. He was perfectly homogeneous, and admitted of no objection, or abridgment. To him, be it understood, ecclesiastical authority was the highest of all; he was devout, superficial, and correct, upon this point as upon all others. In his eyes, a priest was a spirit who was never mistaken, a nun was a being who never sinned. They were souls walled in from this world, with a single door which never opened but for the exit of truth.

On perceiving the sister, his first impulse was to retire.

But there was also another duty which held him, and which urged him imperiously in the opposite direction. His second impulse was to remain, and to venture at least one question.

This was the Sister Simplice, who had never lied in her life. Javert knew this, and venerated her especially on account of it.

"Sister," said he, "are you alone in this room?"

There was a fearful instant during which the poor portress felt her limbs falter beneath her. The sister raised her eyes, and replied:

"Yes."

Then continued Javert—"Excuse me if I persist, it is my duty—you have not seen this evening a person, a man—he has escaped, and we are in search of him—Jean Valjean—you have not seen him?"

The sister answered—"No."

She lied. Two lies in succession, one upon another, without hesitation, quickly, as if she were an adept in it.

"Your pardon!" said Javert, and he withdrew, bowing reverently.

Oh, holy maiden! for many years thou hast been no more in this world; thou hast joined the sisters, the virgins, and thy brethren, the angels, in glory; may this falsehood be remembered to thee in Paradise.

The affirmation of the sister was to Javert something so decisive that he did not even notice the singularity of this taper, just blown out, and smoking on the table.

An hour afterwards, a man was walking rapidly in the darkness beneath the trees from M—— sur M—— in the direction of Paris. This man was Jean Valjean. It has been established, by the testimony of two or three waggoners who met him, that he carried a bundle, and was dressed in a blouse. Where did he get this blouse? It was never known. Nevertheless, an old artisan had died in the infirmary of the factory a few days before, leaving nothing but his blouse. This might have been the one.

A last word in regard to Fantine.

We have all one mother—the earth. Fantine was restored to this mother.

The curé thought best, and did well perhaps, to reserve out of what Jean Valjean had left, the largest amount possible for the poor. After all, who were in question?—a convict and a woman of the town. This was why he simplified the burial of Fantine, and reduced it to that bare necessity called the Potter's field.

And so Fantine was buried in the common grave of the cemetery, which is for everybody and for all, and in which the poor are lost. Happily, God knows where to find the soul. Fantine was laid away in the darkness with bodies which had no name; she suffered the promiscuity of dust. She was thrown into the public pit. Her tomb was like her bed.

COSETTE

BOOK I—WATERLOO

WHAT YOU MEET IN COMING FROM NIVELLES

On a beautiful morning in May, last year (1861), a traveller, he who tells this story, was journeying from Nivelles towards La Hulpe. He travelled a-foot. He was following, between two rows of trees, a broad road, undulating over the hills, which, one after another, upheave it and let it fall again, like enormous waves. He had passed Lillois and Bois-Seigneur-Isaac. He saw to the west the slated steeple of Braine-l'Alleud, which has the form of an inverted vase. He had just passed a wood upon a hill, and at the corner of a cross-road, beside a sort of worm-eaten sign-post, bearing the inscription—*Old Tool-Gate, No.* 4—a tavern with this sign:—*The Four Winds. Echaleau, Private Café.*

Half a mile from this tavern, he reached the bottom of a little valley, where a stream flowed beneath an arch in the embankment of the road. The cluster of trees, thin-sown but very green, which fills the vale on one side of the road, on the other spreads out into meadows, and sweeps away in graceful disorder towards Braine l'Alleud.

At this point there was at the right, and immediately on the road, an inn, with a four-wheeled cart before the door, a great bundle of hop-poles, a plough, a pile of dry brush near a quick-set hedge, some lime which was smoking in a square hole in the ground, and a ladder lying along an old shed with mangers for straw. A young girl was pulling weeds in a field, where a large green poster, probably of a travelling show at some annual fair, fluttered in the wind. At the corner of the inn, beside a pond, in which a flotilla of ducks was navigating, a difficult foot-path lost itself in the shrubbery. The traveller took this path.

At the end of a hundred paces, passing a wall of the fifteenth century, surmounted by a sharp gable of crossed bricks, he found himself opposite a great arched stone doorway, with rectilinear impost, in the solemn style of Louis XIV, and plain medallions on the sides. Over the entrance was a severe façade, and a wall perpendicular to the façade almost touched the doorway, flanking it at an abrupt right angle. On the meadow before the door lay three harrows, through which were blooming, as best they could, all the flowers of May. The doorway was closed. It was shut by two decrepit folding-doors, decorated with an old rusty knocker.

The sunshine was enchanting; the branches of the trees had that gentle tremulousness of the month of May which seems to come from the birds' nests rather than the wind. A spruce little bird, probably in love, was singing desperately in a tall tree.

The traveller paused and examined in the stone at the left of the door, near the ground a large circular excavation like the hollow of a sphere. Just then the folding-doors opened, and a peasant woman came out.

She saw the traveller, and perceived what he was examining.

"It was a French ball which did that," said she.

And she added—

"What you see there, higher up, in the door, near a nail, is the hole made by a Biscay musket. The musket has not gone through the wood."

"What is the name of this place?" asked the traveller.

"Hougomont," the woman answered.

The traveller raised his head. He took a few steps and looked over the hedges. He saw in the horizon, through the trees, a sort of hillock, and on this hillock something which, in the distance, resembled a lion.

He was on the battle-field of Waterloo.

THE 18TH OF JUNE, 1815

LET us go back, for such is the story-teller's privilege, and place ourselves in the year of 1815, a little before the date of the commencement of the action narrated in the first part of this book.

Had it not rained on the night of the 17th of June, 1815, the future of Europe would have been changed. A few drops of water more or less prostrated Napoleon. That Waterloo should be the end of Austerlitz, Providence needed only a little rain, and an unseasonable cloud crossing the sky sufficed for the overthrow of a world.

The battle of Waterloo—and this gave Blucher time to come up—

could not be commenced before half-past eleven. Why? Because the ground was soft. It was necessary to wait for it to acquire some little firmness so that the artillery could manœuvre.

Napoleon was an artillery officer, and he never forgot it. The foundation of this prodigious captain was the man who, in his report to the Directory upon Aboukir, said: *Such of our balls killed six men.* All his plans of battle were made for projectiles. To converge the artillery upon a given point was his key of victory. He treated the strategy of the hostile general as a citadel, and battered it to a breach. He overwhelmed the weak point with grape; he joined and resolved battles with cannon. There was marksmanship in his genius. To destroy squares, to pulverise regiments, to break lines, to crush and disperse masses, all this was for him, to strike, strike, strike incessantly, and he intrusted this duty to the cannon ball. A formidable method, which, joined to genius, made this sombre athlete of the pugilism of war invincible for fifteen years.

On the 18th of June, he counted on his artillery the more because he had the advantage in numbers. Wellington had only a hundred and fifty-nine guns; Napoleon had two hundred and forty.

Had the ground been dry, and the artillery able to move, the action would have been commenced at six o'clock in the morning. The battle would have been won and finished at two o'clock, three hours before the Prussians turned the scale of fortune.

How much fault is there on the part of Napoleon in the loss of this battle? Is the shipwreck to be imputed to the pilot?

Was the evident physical decline of Napoleon accompanied at this time by a corresponding mental decline? had his twenty years of war worn out the sword as well as the sheath, the soul as well as the body? was the veteran injuriously felt in the captain? in a word, was that genius, as many considerable historians have thought, under an eclipse? had he put on a frenzy to disguise his enfeeblement from himself? did he begin to waver, and be bewildered by a random blast? was he becoming, a grave fault in a general, careless of danger? in that class of material great men who may be called the giants of action, is there an age when their genius becomes shortsighted? Old age has no hold on the geniuses of the ideal; for the Dantes and the Michael Angelos, to grow old is to grow great; for the Hannibals and Bonapartes is it to grow less? had Napoleon lost his clear sense of victory? could he no longer recognise the shoal, no longer divine the snare, no longer discern the crumbling edge of the abyss? had he lost the instinct of disaster? was he, who formerly knew all the paths of triumph, and who, from the height of his flashing car, pointed them out with sovereign finger, now under such dark hallucination as to drive his tumultuous train of legions over the precipices? was he seized, at forty-six years, with a supreme madness? was this titanic driver of Destiny now only a monstrous breakneck?

We think not.

His plan of battle was, all confess, a masterpiece. To march straight to the centre of the allied line, pierce the enemy, cut them in two, push the British half upon Hal and the Prussian half upon Tongres, make of Wellington and Blucher two fragments, carry Mont Saint Jean, seize Brussels, throw the German into the Rhine, and the Englishman into the sea. All this, for Napoleon, was in this battle. What would follow, anybody can see.

We do not, of course, profess to give here the history of Waterloo; one of the scenes that gave rise to the drama which we are describing hangs upon that battle; but the history of the battle is not our subject; that history moreover is told, and told in a masterly way, from one point of view by Napoleon, from the other point of view by Charras. As for us, we leave the two historians to their contest; we are only a witness at a distance, a passer in the plain, a seeker bending over this ground kneaded with human flesh, taking perhaps appearances for realities; we have no right to cope in the name of science with a mass of facts in which there is doubtless some mirage; we have neither the military experience nor the strategic ability which authorises a system; in our opinion, a chain of accidents overruled both captains at Waterloo; and when destiny is called in, this mysterious accused, we judge like the people, that artless judge.

Those who would get a clear idea of the battle of Waterloo have only to lay down upon the ground in their mind a capital A. The left stroke of the A is the road from Nivelles, the right stroke is the road from Genappe, the cross of the A is the sunken road from Ohain to Braine l'Alleud. The top of the A is Mont Saint Jean, Wellington is there; the left-hand lower point is Hougomont, Reille is there with Jerome

Bonaparte; the right-hand lower point is La Belle Alliance, Napoleon is there. A little below the point where the cross of the A meets and cuts the right stroke, is La Haie Sainte. At the middle of this cross is the precise point where the final battle-word was spoken. There the lion is placed, the involuntary symbol of the supreme heroism of the Imperial Guard.

The triangle contained at the top of the A, between the two strokes and the cross, is the plateau of Mont Saint Jean. The struggle for this plateau was the whole of the battle.

The wings of the two armies extended to the right and left of the roads from Genappe and from Nivelles; D'Erlon being opposite Picton, Reille opposite Hill.

Behind the point of the A, behind the plateau of Mont Saint Jean, is the forest of Soignes.

As to the plain itself, we must imagine a vast undulating country; each wave commanding the next, and these undulations rising towards Mont Saint Jean, are there bounded by the forest.

Two hostile armies upon a field of battle are two wrestlers. Their arms are locked; each seeks to throw the other. They grasp at every aid; a thicket is a point of support; a corner of a wall is a brace for the shoulder; for lack of a few sheds to lean upon a regiment loses its footing; a depression in the plain, a movement of the soil, a convenient cross path, a wood, a ravine, may catch the heel of this colossus which is called an army, and prevent him from falling. He who leaves the field is beaten. Hence, for the responsible chief, the necessity of examining the smallest tuft of trees and appreciating the slightest details of contour.

Both generals had carefully studied the plain of Mont Saint Jean, now called the plain of Waterloo. Already in the preceding year, Wellington, with the sagacity of prescience, had examined it as a possible site for a great battle. On this ground and for this contest Wellington had the favourable side, Napoleon the unfavourable. The English army was above, the French army below.

To sketch here the appearance of Napoleon, on horseback, glass in hand, upon the heights of Rossomme, at dawn on the 18th of June, 1815, would be almost superfluous. Before we point him out, everybody has seen him. This calm profile under the little chapeau of the school of Brienne, this green uniform, the white facings concealing the stars on his breast, the overcoat concealing the epaulets, the bit of red sash under the waistcoat, the leather breeches, the white horse with his housings of purple velvet with crowned N.'s and eagles on the corners, the Hessian boots over silk stockings, the silver spurs, the Marengo sword, this whole form of the last Cæsar lives in all imaginations, applauded by half the world, reprobated by the rest.

That form has long been fully illuminated; it did have certain traditional obscurity through which most heroes pass, and which always veils the truth for a longer or shorter time; but now the history is luminous and complete.

This light of history is pitiless; it has this strange and divine quality that, all luminous as it is, and precisely because it is luminous, it casts a shadow just where we saw a radiance; of the same man it makes two different phantoms, and the one attacks and punishes the other, and the darkness of the despot struggles with the splendour of the captain. Hence results a truer measure in the final judgment of the nations. Babylon violated lessens Alexander; Rome enslaved lessens Cæsar; massacred Jerusalem lessens Titus. Tyranny follows the tyrant. It is woe to a man to leave behind a shadow which has his form.

THE FIELD OF BATTLE AT NIGHT

We return, for it is a requirement of this book, to the fatal field of battle.

On the 18th of June, 1815, the moon was full. Its light favoured the ferocious pursuit of Blücher, disclosed the traces of the fugitives, delivered this helpless mass to the bloodthirsty Prussian cavalry, and aided in the massacre. Night sometimes lends such tragic assistance to catastrophe.

When the last gun had been fired the plain of Mont Saint Jean remained deserted.

The English occupied the camp of the French; it is the usual verification of victory to sleep in the bed of the vanquished. They established their bivouac around Rossomme. The Prussians, let loose upon the fugitives, pushed forward. Wellington went to the village of Waterloo to make up his report to Lord Bathurst.

Towards midnight a man was prowling or rather crawling along the sunken road of Ohain. He was, to all appearances, neither English nor French, peasant nor soldier, less a man than a ghoul, attracted by the scent of the corpses, counting theft for victory, coming to rifle Waterloo. He was dressed in a blouse which was in part a capote, was restless and daring, looking behind and before as he went. Who was this man? Night, probably, knew more of his doings than day! He had no knapsack, but evidently large pockets under his capote. From time to time he stopped, examined the plain around him as if to see if he were observed, stooped down suddenly, stirred on the ground something silent and motionless, then rose up and skulked away. His gliding movement, his attitudes, his rapid and mysterious gestures, made him seem like those twilight spectres which haunt ruins and which the old Norman legends call the Goers.

Certain nocturnal water-birds make such motions in marshes.

An eye which had carefully penetrated all this haze, might have noticed at some distance, standing as it were concealed behind the ruin which is on the Nivelle road at the corner of the route from Mont Saint Jean to Brain l'Alleud, a sort of little sutler's waggon, covered with tarred osiers, harnessed to a famished jade browsing nettles through her bit, and in the waggon a sort of woman seated on some trunks and packages. Perhaps there was some connection between this waggon and the prowler.

The night was serene. Not a cloud was in the zenith. What mattered it that the earth was red, the moon retained her whiteness. Such is the indifference of heaven. In the meadows, branches of trees broken by grape, but not fallen, and held by the bark, swung gently in the night wind. A breath, almost a respiration, moved the brushwood. There was a quivering in the grass which seemed like the departure of souls.

The tread of the patrols and groundsmen of the English camp could be heard dimly in the distance.

Hougomont and La Haie Sainte continued to burn, making, one in the east and the other in the west, two great flames, to which was attached, like a necklace of rubies with two carbuncles at its extremities, the cordon of bivouac fires of the English, extending in an immense semicircle over the hills of the horizon.

The cut of the sunken road was filled with horses and riders inextricably heaped together. Terrible entanglement. There were no longer slopes to the road; dead bodies filled it even with the plain, and came to the edge of the banks like a well-measured bushel of barley. A mass of dead above, a river of blood below—such was this road on the evening of the 18th of June, 1815. The blood ran even to the Nivelles road, and oozed through in a large pool in front of the abattis of trees, which barred that road, at a spot which is still shown. It was, it will be remembered, at the opposite point, towards the road from Genappe, that the burying of the cuirassiers took place. The thickness of the mass of bodies was proportioned to the depth of the hollow road. Towards the middle, at a spot where it became shallower, over which Delord's division had passed, this bed of death became thinner.

The night prowler which we have just introduced to the reader went in this direction. He ferreted through this immense grave. He looked about. He passed an indescribably hideous review of the dead. He walked with his feet in blood.

Suddenly he stopped.

A few steps before him, in the sunken road, at a point where the mound of corpses ended, from under this mass of men and horses appeared an open hand, lighted by the moon.

This hand had something upon a finger which sparkled; it was a gold ring.

The man stooped down, remained a moment, and when he rose again there was no ring upon that hand.

He did not rise up precisely; he remained in a sinister and startled attitude, turning his back to the pile of dead, scrutinising the horizon, on his knees, all the front of his body being supported on his two forefingers, his head raised just enough to peep above the edge of the hollow road. The four paws of the jackal are adapted to certain actions.

Then, deciding upon his course, he arose.

At this moment he experienced a shock. He felt that he was held from behind.

He turned; it was the open hand, which had closed, seizing the lappel of his capote.

An honest man would have been frightened. This man began to laugh.

"Oh," said he, "it's only the dead man. I like a ghost better than a gendarme."

However, the hand relaxed and let go its hold. Strength is soon exhausted in the tomb.

"Ah ha!" returned the prowler, "is this dead man alive? Let us see."

He bent over again, rummaged among the heap, removed whatever impeded him, seized the hand, laid hold of the arm, disengaged the head, drew out the body, and some moments after dragged into the shadow of the hollow road an inanimate man, at least one who was senseless. It was a cuirassier, an officer; an officer, also, of some rank; a great gold epaulet protruded from beneath his cuirass, but he had no casque. A furious sabre cut had disfigured his face, where nothing but blood was to be seen. It did not seem, however, that he had any limbs broken; and by some happy chance; if the word is possible here, the bodies arched above him in such a way as to prevent his being crushed. His eyes were closed.

He had on his cuirass the silver cross of the Legion of Honour.

The prowler tore off this cross, which disappeared in one of the gulfs which he had under his capote.

After which he felt the officer's fob, found a watch there, and took it. Then he rummaged in his vest and found a purse, which he pocketed.

When he had reached this phase of the succour he was lending the dying man, the officer opened his eyes.

"Thanks," said he feebly.

The rough movements of the man handling him, the coolness of the night, and breathing the fresh air freely, had roused him from his lethargy.

The prowler answered not. He raised his head. The sound of a footstep could be heard on the plain; probably it was some patrol who was approaching.

The officer murmured, for there were still signs of suffering in his voice:

"Who has gained the battle?"

"The English," answered the prowler.

The officer replied:

"Search my pockets. You will there find a purse and a watch. Take them."

This had already been done.

The prowler made a pretence of executing the command, and said:

"There is nothing there."

"I have been robbed," replied the officer; "I am sorry. They would have been yours."

The step of the patrol became more and more distinct.

Somebody is coming," said the prowler, making a movement as if he would go.

The officer, raising himself up painfully upon one arm, held him back.

"You have saved my life. Who are you?"

The prowler answered quick and low:

"I belong, like yourself, to the French army. I must go. If I am taken I shall be shot. I have saved your life. Help yourself now."

"What is your grade?"

"Sergeant."

"What is your name?"

"Thénardier."

"I shall not forget that name," said the officer. "And you, remember mine. My name is Pontmercy."

BOOK II—THE SHIP ORION

NUMBER 24601 BECOMES NUMBER 9430

JEAN VALJEAN has been retaken.

We shall be pardoned for passing rapidly over the painful details. We shall merely reproduce a couple of items published in the newspapers of that day, some few months after the remarkable events that occurred at M—— sur M——.

The articles referred to are somewhat laconic. It will be remembered that the *Gazette des Tribunaux* had not yet been established.

We copy the first from the *Drapeau Blanc*. It is dated the 25th of July, 1823:

"A district of the Pas-de-Calais has just been the scene of an extraordinary occurrence. A stranger in that department, known as Monsieur Madeleine, had, within a few years past, restored, by means of certain new processes, the manufacture of jet and black glass ware—a former local branch of industry. He had made his own fortune by it, and, in fact, that of the entire district. In acknowledgment of his services he had been appointed mayor. The police has discovered that Monsieur Madeleine was none other than an escaped convict, condemned in 1796 for robbery, and named Jean Valjean. This Jean Valjean has been sent back to the galleys. It appears that previous to his arrest, he succeeded in withdrawing from Laffitte's a sum amounting to more than half a million which he had deposited there, and which it is said, by the way, he had very legitimately realised in his business. Since his return to the galleys at Toulon, it has been impossible to discover where Jean Valjean concealed this money."

The second article, which enters a little more into detail, is taken from the *Journal de Paris* of the same date:

"An old convict, named Jean Valjean, has recently been brought before the Var Assizes, under circumstances calculated to attract attention. This villain had succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the police; he had changed his name, and had even been adroit enough to procure the appointment of mayor in one of our small towns in the North. He had established in this town a very considerable business, but was, at length, unmasked and arrested, thanks to the indefatigable zeal of the public authorities. Consequently, Jean Valjean, being found guilty, was condemned to death. The criminal refused to appeal to the higher courts, and the king, in his inexhaustible clemency, deigned to commute his sentence to that of hard labour in prison for life. Jean Valjean was immediately forwarded to the galleys at Toulon."

It will not be forgotten that Jean Valjean had at M—— sur M—— certain religious habits. Some of the newspapers and, among them, the

Constitutionnel, held up this commutation as a triumph of the clerical party.

Jean Valjean changed his number at the galleys. He became 9430.

SHOWING THAT THE CHAIN OF THE IRON RING MUST NEEDS HAVE UNDERGONE A CERTAIN PREPARATION TO BE THUS BROKEN BY ONE BLOW OF THE HAMMER

Towards the end of October, in that same year, 1823, the inhabitants of Toulon saw coming back into their port, in consequence of heavy weather, and in order to repair some damages, the ship *Orion,* which was at a later period employed at Brest as a vessel of instruction, and which then formed a part of the Mediterranean squadron. This ship, crippled as she was, for the sea had used her roughly, produced some sensation on entering the roadstead. She flew I forget what pennant, but it entitled her to a regular salute of eleven guns, which she returned shot for shot: in all twenty-two.

Every day from morning till night, the quays, the wharves, and the piers of the port of Toulon were covered with a throng of saunterers and idlers, whose occupation consisted in gazing at the *Orion.*

The *Orion* was a ship that had long been in bad condition. During her previous voyages, thick layers of shellfish had gathered on her bottom to such an extent as to seriously impede her progress; she had been put on the dry-dock the year before, to be scraped, and then she had gone to sea again. But this scraping had injured her fastening.

In the latitude of the Balearic Isles, her planking had loosened and opened, and as there was in those days no copper sheathing, the ship had leaked. A fierce equinoctial came on, which had stove in the larboard bows and a porthole, and damaged the fore-chain-wales. In consequence of these injuries, the *Orion* had put back to Toulon.

She was moored near the arsenal. She was in commission and they were repairing her. The hull had not been injured on the starboard side, but a few planks had been taken off here and there, according to custom, to admit the air to the framework.

One morning the throng which was gazing at her witnessed an accident.

The crew was engaged in furling sail. The topman, whose duty it was to take in the starboard upper corner of the main top-sail, lost his balance. He was seen tottering; the dense throng assembled on the wharf of the arsenal uttered a cry, the man's head overbalanced his body, and he whirled over the yard, his arms outstretched towards the deep; as he went over, he grasped the man-ropes, first with one hand, and then the other, and hung suspended in that manner. The sea lay far below him at a giddy depth. The shock of his fall had given to the man-ropes a violent swinging motion, and the poor fellow hung dangling to and fro at the end of this line, like a stone in a sling.

To go to his aid was to run a frightful risk. None of the crew, who were all fishermen of the coast recently taken into service, dared attempt it. In the meantime, the poor topman was becoming exhausted; his agony could not be seen in his countenance, but his increasing weakness could be detected in the movements of all his limbs. His arms twisted about in horrible contortions. Every attempt he made to reascend only increased the oscillations of the man-ropes. He did not cry out, for fear of losing his strength. All were now looking forward to the moment when he should let go of the rope, and, at instants, all turned their heads away that they might not see him fall. There are moments when a rope's end, a pole, the branch of a tree, is life itself, and it is a frightful thing to see a living being lose his hold upon it, and fall like a ripe fruit.

Suddenly, a man was discovered clambering up the rigging with the agility of a wildcat. This man was clad in red—it was a convict; he wore a green cap—it was a convict for life. As he reached the round top, a gust of wind blew off his cap and revealed a head entirely white: it was not a young man.

In fact, one of the convicts employed on board in some prison task, had at the first alarm, run to the officer of the watch, and, amid the confusion and hesitation of the crew, while all the sailors trembled and shrank back, had asked permission to save the topman's life at the risk of his own. A sign of assent being given, with one blow of a hammer he broke the chain riveted to the iron ring at his ankle, then took a rope in his hand, and flung himself into the shrouds. Nobody, at the moment, noticed with what ease the chain was broken. It was only some time afterwards that anybody remembered it.

In a twinkling he was upon the yard. He paused a few seconds, and seemed to measure it with his glance. Those seconds, during which the wind swayed the sailor to and fro at the end of the rope, seemed ages to the lookers-on. At length, the convict raised his eyes to heaven, and took a step forward. The crowd drew a long breath. He was seen to run along the yard. On reaching its extreme tip, he fastened one end of the rope he had with him, and let the other hang at full length. Thereupon, he began to let himself down by his hands along this rope, and then there was an inexpressible sensation of terror; instead of one man, two were seen dangling at that giddy height.

You would have said it was a spider seizing a fly; only, in this case, the spider was bringing life, and not death. Ten thousand eyes were fixed upon the group. Not a cry; not a word was uttered; the same emotion contracted every brow. Every man held his breath, as if afraid to add the least whisper to the wind which was swaying the two unfortunate men.

However, the convict had at length, managed to make his way down to the seaman. It was time; one minute more, and the man, exhausted and despairing, would have fallen into the deep. The convict firmly secured him to the rope to which he clung with one hand while he worked with the other. Finally, he was seen reascending to the yard and hauling the sailor after him; he supported him there, for an instant, to let him recover his strength, and then, lifting him in his arms, carried him, as he walked along the yard, to the crosstrees, and from there to the round-top, where he left him in the hands of his messmates.

Then the throng applauded; old galley sergeants wept, women hugged each other on the wharves, and on all sides, voices were heard exclaiming, with a sort of tenderly subdued enthusiasm:—"This man must be pardoned!"

He, however, had made it a point of duty to descend again immediately, and go back to his work. In order to arrive more quickly, he slid down the rigging, and started to run along a lower yard. All eyes were following him. There was a certain moment when every one felt alarmed; whether it was that he felt fatigued, or because his head swam, people thought they saw him hesitate and stagger.

Suddenly, the throng uttered a thrilling outcry: the convict had fallen into the sea.

The fall was perilous. The frigate *Algesiras* was moored close to the *Orion,* and the poor convict had plunged between the two ships. It was feared that he would be drawn under one or the other. Four men sprang, at once, into a boat. The people cheered them on, and anxiety again took possession of all minds. The man had not again risen to the surface. He had disappeared in the sea, without making even a ripple, as though he had fallen into a cask of oil. They sounded and dragged the place. It was in vain. The search was continued until night, but not even the body was found.

The next morning, the *Toulon Journal* published the following lines:—"November 17, 1823. Yesterday, a convict at work on board of the *Orion,* on his return from rescuing a sailor, fell into the sea, and was drowned. His body was not recovered. It is presumed that it has been caught under the piles at the pier-head of the arsenal. This man was registered by the number 9430, and his name was Jean Valjean."

BOOK III—FULFILMENT OF THE PROMISE TO THE DEPARTED

THE WATER QUESTION AT MONTFERMEIL

Montfermeil is situated between Livry and Chelles, upon the southern slope of the high plateau which separates the Ourcq from the Marne. At present, it is a considerable town, adorned all the year round with stuccoed villas, and, on Sundays, with citizens in full blossom. In 1823, there were at Montfermeil neither so many white houses nor so many comfortable citizens; it was nothing but a village in the woods. You would find, indeed, here and there a few country seats of the last century, recognisable by their grand appearance, their balconies of twisted iron, and those long windows the little panes of which show all sort of different greens upon the white of the closed shutters. But

Montfermeil was none the less a village. Retired dry-goods merchants and amateur villagers had not yet discovered it. It was a peaceful and charming spot, and not upon the road to any place; the inhabitants cheaply enjoyed that rural life which is so luxuriant and so easy of enjoyment. But water was scarce there on account of the height of the plateau.

They had to go a considerable distance for it. The end of the village towards Gagny drew its water from the magnificent ponds in the forest on that side; the other end, which surrounds the church and which is towards Chelles, found drinking-water only at a little spring on the side of the hill, near the road to Chelles, about fifteen minutes' walk from Montfermeil.

It was therefore a serious matter for each household to obtain its supply of water. The great houses, the aristocracy, the Thénardier tavern included, paid a penny a bucket-full to an old man who made it his business, and whose income from the Montfermeil water-works was about eight sous per day; but this man worked only till seven o'clock in summer and five in the winter, and when night had come on and the first-floor shutters were closed, whoever had no drinking-water went after it, or went without it.

This was the terror of the poor being whom the reader has not perhaps forgotten—little Cosette. It will be remembered that Cosette was useful to the Thénardiers in two ways, they got pay from the mother and work from the child. Thus when the mother ceased entirely to pay, we have seen why, in the preceding chapters, the Thénardiers kept Cosette. She saved them a servant. In that capacity she ran for water when it was wanted. So the child, always horrified at the idea of going to the spring at night, took good care that water should never be wanting at the house.

Christmas in the year 1823 was particularly brilliant at Montfermeil. The early part of the winter had been mild; so far there had been neither frost nor snow. Some jugglers from Paris had obtained permission from the mayor to set up their stalls in the main street of the village, and a company of pedlars had, under the same licence, put up their booths in the square before the church and even in the lane du Boulanger, upon which, as the reader perhaps remembers, the Thénardier chop-house was situated. This filled up the taverns

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SEVERAL MEN WERE SEATED AT TABLE AROUND FOUR OR FIVE CANDLES IN THE LOW HALL OF THE THÉNARDIER TAVERN

and pot-houses, and gave to this little quiet place a noisy and joyous appearance.

On that Christmas evening several men, waggoners and pedlars, were seated at table and drinking around four or five candles in the low hall of the Thénardier tavern. This room resembled all bar-rooms; tables, pewter-mugs, bottles, drinkers, smokers, little light, and much noise. The date, 1823, was, however, indicated by the two things then in vogue with the middle classes, which were on the table, a kaleidoscope and a fluted tin lamp. Thénardier, the wife, was looking to the supper, which was cooking before a bright blazing fire; the husband, Thénardier, was drinking with his guests and talking politics.

Cosette was at her usual place, seated on the cross-piece of the kitchen table, near the fireplace; she was clad in rags; her bare feet were in wooden shoes, and by the light of the fire she was knitting woollen stockings for the little Thénardiers. A young kitten was playing under the chairs. In a neighbouring room the fresh voices of two children were heard laughing and prattling; it was Eponine and Azelma.

In the chimney-corner, a cow-hide hung upon a nail.

At intervals, the cry of a very young child, which was somewhere in the house, was heard above the noise of the bar-room

When the hungry clamour became too much to bear:—"Your boy is squalling," said Thénardier, "why don't you go and see what he wants?" "Bah!" answered the mother; "I am sick of him." And the poor little fellow continued to cry in the darkness.

MEN MUST HAVE WINE AND HORSES WATER

Four new guests had just come in.

Cosette was musing sadly; for, though she was only eight years old, she had already suffered so much that she mused with the mournful air of an old woman.

She had a black eye from a blow of the Thénardiess's fist, which made the Thénardiess say from time to time, "How ugly she is with her patch on her eye."

Cosette was then thinking that it was evening, late in the evening, that the bowls and pitchers in the rooms of the travellers who had arrived must be filled immediately, and that there was no more water in the cistern.

One thing comforted her a little; they did not drink much water in the Thénardier tavern. There were plenty of people there who were thirsty; but it was the kind of thirst which reaches rather towards the jug than the pitcher. Had anybody asked for a glass of water among these glasses of wine, he would have seemed a savage to all those men. However there was an instant when the child trembled; the Thénardiess raised the cover of a kettle which was boiling on the range, then took a glass and hastily approached the cistern. She turned the faucet; the child had raised her head and followed all her movements. A thin stream of water ran from the faucet, and filled the glass half full.

"Here," said she, "there is no more water!" Then she was silent for a moment. The child held her breath.

"Pshaw!" continued the Thénardiess, examining the half-filled glass, "there is enough of it, such as it is."

Cosette resumed her work, but for more than a quarter of an hour she felt her heart leaping into her throat like a great ball.

She counted the minutes as they thus rolled away, and eagerly wished it were morning.

From time to time, one of the drinkers would look out into the street and exclaim:—"It is as black as an oven!" or, "It would take a cat to go along the street without a lantern tonight!" And Cosette shuddered.

All at once, one of the pedlars who lodged in the tavern came in, and said in a harsh voice:

"You have not watered my horse."

"Yes we have, sure," said the Thénardiess.

"I tell you no, ma'am," replied the pedlar.

Cosette came out from under the table.

"Oh yes, monsieur!" said she, "the horse did drink; he drank in the bucket, the bucket full, and 'twas me that carried it to him, and I talked to him."

This was not true. Cosette lied.

"Here is a girl as big as my fist, who can tell a lie as big as a house," exclaimed the pedlar. "I tell you that he has not had any water, little wench! He has a way of blowing when he has not had any water, that I know well enough."

Cosette persisted, and added in a voice stifled with anguish, and which could hardly be heard:

"But he did drink a good deal."

"Come," continued the pedlar, in a passion, "that is enough; give my horse some water, and say no more about it."

Cosette went back under the table.

"Well of course that is right," said the Thénardiess; if the beast has not had any water, she must have some."

Then looking about her:

"Well, what has become of that girl?"

She stooped down and discovered Cosette crouched at the other end of the table, almost under the feet of the drinkers.

"Arn't you coming?" cried the Thénardiess.

Cosette came out of the kind of a hole where she had hidden. The Thénardiess continued:

"Mademoiselle Dog-without-a-name, go and carry some drink to this horse."

"But, ma'am," said Cosette feebly, "there is no water."

The Thénardiess threw the street door wide open.

"Well, go after some!"

Cosette hung her head, and went for an empty bucket that was by the chimney corner.

The bucket was larger than she, and the child could have sat down in it comfortably.

The Thénardiess went back to her range, and tasted what was in the kettle with a wooden spoon, grumbling the while.

"There is some at the spring. She is the worst girl that ever was. I think 'twould have been better if I'd left out the onions."

Then she fumbled in a drawer where there were some pennies, pepper, and garlic.

"Here, Mamselle Toad," added she, "get a big loaf at the baker's, as you come back. Here is fifteen sous."

Cosette had a little pocket in the side of her apron; she took the piece without saying a word, and put it in that pocket.

Then she remained motionless, bucket in hand, the open door before her. She seemed to be waiting for somebody to come to her aid.

"Get along!" cried the Thénardiess.

Cosette went out. The door closed.

A DOLL ENTERS UPON THE SCENE

The row of booths extended along the street from the church, the reader will remember, as far as the Thénardier tavern. These booths, on account of the approaching passage of the citizens on their way to the midnight mass, were all illuminated with candles burning in paper lanterns, which, as the schoolmaster of Montfermeil, who was at that moment seated at one of Thénardier's tables, said, produced a magical effect. In retaliation, not a star was to be seen in the sky.

The last of these stalls, set up exactly opposite Thénardier's door, was a toy-shop, all glittering with trinkets, glass beads, and things magnificent in tin. In the first rank, and in front, the merchant had placed, upon a bed of white napkins, a great doll nearly two feet high dressed in a robe of pink-crape with golden wheat-ears on its head, and which had real hair and enamel eyes. The whole day, this marvel had been displayed to the bewilderment of the passers under ten years of age, but there had not been found in Montfermeil a mother rich enough, or prodigal enough to give it to her child. Eponine and Azelma had passed hours in contemplating it, and Cosette herself, furtively, it is true, had dared to look at it.

At the moment when Cosette went out, bucket in hand, all gloomy and overwhelmed as she was, she could not help raising her eyes towards this wonderful doll, towards *the lady,* as she called it. The poor child stopped petrified. She had not seen this doll so near before.

This whole booth seemed a palace to her; this doll was not a doll, it was a vision. It was a joy, splendour, riches, happiness, and it appeared in a sort of chimerical radiance to this unfortunate little being, buried so deeply in a cold and dismal misery. Cosette was measuring with the sad and simple sagacity of childhood the abyss which separated her from that doll. She was saying to herself that one must be a queen, or at least a princess, to have a "thing" like that. She gazed upon this beautiful pink dress, this beautiful smooth hair, and she was thinking, "How happy must be that doll!" Her eye could not turn away from this fantastic booth. The longer she looked, the more she was dazzled. She thought she saw paradise. There were other dolls behind the large one that appeared to her to be fairies and genii. The merchant walking to and fro in the back part of his stall, suggested the Eternal Father.

In this adoration, she forgot everything, even the errand on which she had been sent. Suddenly, the harsh voice of the Thénardiess called her back to the reality: "How, jade, haven't you gone yet? Hold on; I am coming for you! I'd like to know what she's doing there? Little monster, be off!"

The Thénardiess had glanced into the street, and perceived Cosette in ecstasy.

Cosette fled with her bucket, running as fast as she could.

THE LITTLE GIRL ALL ALONE

As the Thénardier tavern was in that part of the village which is near the church, Cosette had to go to the spring in the woods towards Chelles to draw water.

She looked no more at the displays in the booths, so long as she was in the lane Boulanger; and in the vicinity of the church, the illuminated stalls lighted the way, but soon the last gleam from the last stall disappeared. The poor child found herself in darkness. She became buried in it. Only, as she became the prey of a certain sensation, she shook the handle of the bucket as much as she could on her way. That made a noise, which kept her company.

The further she went, the thicker became the darkness. There was no longer anybody in the street. However, she met a woman who turned around on seeing her pass, and remained motionless muttering between her teeth; "Where in the world can that child be going? Is it a phantom child?" Then the woman recognised Cosette. "Oh," said she, "it is the lark!"

Cosette thus passed through the labyrinth of crooked and deserted streets, which terminates the village of Montfermeil towards Chelles. As long as she had houses, or even walls, on the sides of the road, she went on boldly enough. From time to time, she saw the light of a candle through the cracks of a shutter; it was light and life to her; there were people there; that kept up her courage. However, as she advanced, her speed slackened as if mechanically. When she had passed the corner of the last house, Cosette stopped. To go beyond the last booth had been difficult; to go further than the last house became impossible. She put the bucket on the ground, buried her hands in her hair, and began to scratch her head slowly, a motion peculiar to terrified and hesitating children. It was Montfermeil no longer, it was the open country; dark and deserted space was before her. She looked with despair into this darkness where nobody was, where there were beasts, where there were perhaps ghosts. She looked intensely, and she heard the animals walking in the grass, and she distinctly saw the ghosts moving in the trees. Then she seized her bucket again; fear gave her boldness: "Pshaw," said she, "I will tell her there isn't any more water!" And she resolutely went back into Montfermeil.

She had scarcely gone a hundred steps when she stopped again, and began to scratch her head. Now, it was the Thénardiess that appeared to her; the hideous Thénardiess, with her hyena mouth, and wrath flashing from her eyes. The child cast a pitiful glance before her and behind her. What could she do? What would become of her? Where should she go? Before her, the spectre of the Thénardiess; behind her, all the phantoms of night and of the forest. It was at the Thénardiess that she recoiled. She took the road to the spring again, and began to run. She ran out of the village; she ran into the woods, seeing nothing, hearing nothing. She did not stop running until out of breath, and even then she staggered on. She went right on, desperate.

Even while running she wanted to cry.

The nocturnal tremulousness of the forest wrapped her about completely.

She thought no more; she saw nothing more. The immensity of night confronted this little creature. On one side, the infinite shadow; on the other, an atom.

It was only seven or eight minutes' walk from the edge of the woods to the spring. Cosette knew the road, from travelling it several times a day. Strange thing, she did not lose her way. A remnant of instinct guided her blindly. But she neither turned her eyes to the right nor to the left, for fear of seeing things in the trees and in the bushes. Thus she arrived at the spring.

It was a small natural basin, made by the water in the loamy soil, about two feet deep, surrounded with moss, and with that long figured grass called Henry Fourth's collars, and paved with a few large stones. A brook escaped from it with a gentle, tranquil murmur.

Cosette did not take time to breathe. It was very dark, but she was accustomed to come to this fountain. She felt with her left hand in the darkness for a young oak which bent over the spring and usually served her as a support, found a branch, swung herself from it, bent down and plunged the bucket in the water. She was for a moment so excited that her strength was tripled. When she was thus bent over, she did not notice that the pocket of her apron emptied itself into the spring. The fifteen-sous piece fell into the water. Cosette neither saw it nor heard it fall. She drew out the bucket almost full and set it on the grass.

This done, she perceived that her strength was exhausted. She was anxious to start at once; but the effort of filling the bucket had been so great that it was impossible for her to take a step. She was compelled to sit down. She fell upon the grass and remained in a crouching posture.

Her hands, which she had wet in drawing the water, felt cold. She arose. Her fear had returned, a natural and insurmountable fear. She had only one thought, to fly; to fly with all her might, across woods, across fields, to houses, to windows, to lighted candles. Her eyes fell upon the bucket that was before her. Such was the dread with which the Thénardiess inspired her, that she did not dare to go without the bucket of water. She grasped the handle with both hands. She could hardly lift the bucket.

She went a dozen steps in this manner, but the bucket was full, it was heavy, she was compelled to rest it on the ground. She breathed an instant, then grasped the handle again, and walked on, this time a little longer. But she had to stop again. After resting a few seconds, she started on. She walked bending forward, her head down, like an old woman: the weight of the bucket strained and stiffened her thin arms. The iron handle was numbing and freezing her little wet hands;

from time to time she had to stop, and every time she stopped, the cold water that splashed from the bucket fell upon her naked knees. This took place in the depth of a wood, at night, in the winter, far from all human sight; it was a child of eight years; there was none but God that moment who saw this sad thing.

She breathed with a kind of mournful rattle; sobs choked her, but she did not dare to weep, so fearful was she of theThénardiess, even at a distance. She always imagined that the Thénardiess was near.

However she could not make much headway in this manner, and was getting along very slowly. She tried hard to shorten her resting spells, and to walk as far as possible between them. She remembered with anguish that it would take her more than an hour to return to Montfermeil thus, and that the Thénardiess would beat her. This anguish added to her dismay at being alone in the woods at night. She was worn out with fatigue, and was not yet out of the forest. Arriving near an old chestnut tree which she knew, she made a last halt, longer than the others, to get well rested; then she gathered all her strength, took up the bucket again, and began to walk on courageously. Meanwhile the poor little despairing thing could not help crying: "Oh! my God! my God!"

At that moment she felt all at once that the weight of the bucket was gone. A hand, which seemed enormous to her, had just caught the handle, and was carrying it easily. She raised her head. A large dark form, straight and erect, was walking beside her in the gloom. It was a man who had come up behind her, and whom she had not heard. This man, without saying a word, had grasped the handle of the bucket she was carrying.

There are instincts for all the crises of life.

The child was not afraid.

COSETTE SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE UNKNOWN IN THE DARKNESS

The man spoke to her. His voice was serious, and was almost a whisper.

"My child, that is very heavy for you which you are carrying there."

Cosette raised her head and answered:

"Yes, monsieur."

"Give it to me," the man continued, "I will carry it for you."

Cosette let go of the bucket. The man walked along with her.

"It is very heavy, indeed," said he to himself. Then he added:

"Little girl, how old are you?"

"Eight years, monsieur."

"And have you come far in this way?"

"From the spring in the woods."

"And are you going far?"

"A good quarter of an hour from here."

The man remained a moment without speaking, then he said abruptly:

"You have no mother then?"

"I don't know," answered the child.

Before the man had time to say a word, she added:

"I don't believe I have. All the rest have one. For my part, I have none."

And after a silence, she added:

"I believe I never had any."

The man stopped, put the bucket on the ground, stooped down and placed his hands upon the child's shoulders, making an effort to look at her and see her face in the darkness.

The thin and puny face of Cosette was vaguely outlined in the livid light of the sky.

"What is your name?" said the man.

"Cosette."

It seemed as if the man had an electric shock. He looked at her again, then letting go of her shoulders, took up the bucket, and walked on.

A moment after, he asked:

"Little girl, where do you live?"

"At Montfermeil, if you know it."

"It is there that we are going?"

"Yes, monsieur."

He made another pause, and then he began:

"Who is it that has sent you out into the woods after water at this time of night?"

"Madame Thénardier."

The man resumed with a tone of voice which he tried to render indifferent, but in which there was nevertheless a singular tremor:

"What does she do, your Madame Thénardier?"

"She is my mistress," said the child. She keeps the tavern."

"The tavern," said the man. "Well I am going there to lodge to-night. Show me the way."

"We are going there," said the child.

The man walked very fast. Cosette followed him without difficulty. She felt fatigue no more. From time to time, she raised her eyes towards this man with a sort of tranquillity and inexpressible confidence. She had never been taught to turn towards Providence and to pray. However, she felt in her bosom something that resembled hope and joy, and which rose towards heaven.

A few minutes passed. The man spoke:

"Is there no servant at Madame Thénardier's?"

"No, monsieur."

"Are you alone?"

"Yes, monsieur."

They reached the village; Cosette guided the stranger through the streets. They passed by the bakery, but Cosette did not think of the bread she was to have brought back. The man questioned her no more, and now maintained a mournful silence. When they had passed the church, the man seeing all these booths in the street, asked Cosette:

"Is it fair-time here!"

"No, monsieur, it is Christmas."

As they drew near the tavern, Cosette timidly touched his arm:

"Monsieur?"

"What, my child?"

"Here we are close by the house."

"Well?"

"Will you let me take the bucket now?"

"What for?"

"Because, if madame sees that anybody brought it for me, she will beat me."

The man gave her the bucket. A moment after they were at the door of the chop-house.

INCONVENIENCE OF ENTERTAINING A POOR MAN WHO IS PERHAPS RICH

Cosette could not help casting one look towards the grand doll still displayed in the toy-shop, then she rapped. The door opened. The Thénardiess appeared with a candle in her hand.

"Oh! it is you, you little beggar! Lud-amassy! you have taken your time! she has been playing, the wench!"

"Madame," said Cosette, trembling, "there is a gentleman who is coming to lodge."

The Thénardiess very quickly replaced her fierce air by her amiable grimace, a change at sight peculiar to innkeepers, and looked for the new-comer with eager eyes.

"Is it monsieur?" said she.

"Yes, madame," answered the man, touching his hat.

Rich travellers are not so polite. This gesture and the sight of the stranger's costume and baggage which the Thénardiess passed in review at a glance made the amiable grimace disappear and the fierce air reappear. She added drily:

"Enter, goodman."

The "goodman" entered. The Thénardiess cast a second glance at him, examined particularly his long coat which was absolutely threadbare, and his hat which was somewhat broken, and with a nod, a wink, and a turn of her nose, consulted her husband, who was still drinking with the waggoners. The husband answered by that imperceptible shake of the forefinger which, supported by a protrusion of the lips, signifies in such a case: "complete destitution." Upon this the Thénardiess exclaimed:

"Ah! my brave man, I am very sorry, but I have no room."

"Put me where you will," said the man, "in the garret, in the stable. I will pay as if I had a room."

"Forty sous."

"Forty sous. Well."

"In advance."

"Forty sous," whispered a waggoner to the Thénardiess, "but it is only twenty sous."

"It is forty sous for him," replied the Thénardiess in the same tone. "I don't lodge poor people for less."

"That is true," added her husband softly, "it ruins a house to have this sort of people."

Meanwhile the man, after leaving his stick and bundle on a bench, had seated himself at a table on which Cosette had been quick to place a bottle of wine and a glass. The pedlar, who had asked for the bucket of water, had gone himself to carry it to his horse. Cosette had resumed her place under the kitchen table and her knitting.

The man, who hardly touched his lips to the wine he had turned out, was contemplating the child with a strange attention.

Suddenly, the Thénardiess exclaimed out:

"Oh! I forgot! that bread!"

Cosette, according to her custom whenever the Thénardiess raised her voice sprang out quickly from under the table.

She had entirely forgotten the bread. She had recourse to the expedient of children who are always terrified. She lied.

"Madame, the baker was shut."

"You ought to have knocked."

"I did knock, madame."

"Well?"

"He didn't open."

"I'll find out to-morrow if that is true," said the Thénardiess, "and if you are lying you will lead a pretty dance. Meantime, give me back the fifteen-sous piece.

Cosette plunged her hand into her apron pocket, and turned white. The fifteen-sous piece was not there.

"Come," said the Thénardiess, "didn't you hear me?"

Cosette turned her pocket inside out; there was nothing there. What could have become of that money? The little unfortunate could not utter a word. She was petrified.

"Have you lost it, the fifteen-sous piece?" screamed the Thénardiess, "or do you want to steal it from me?"

At the same time she reached her arm towards the cowhide hanging in the chimney corner.

This menacing movement gave Cosette the strength to cry out:

"Forgive me! Madame! Madame! I won't do so any more!"

The Thénardiess took down the whip.

Meanwhile the man in the yellow coat had been fumbling in his waistcoat pocket, without being noticed. The other travellers were drinking or playing cards, and paid no attention to anything.

Cosette was writhing with anguish in the chimney-corner, trying to gather up and hide her poor half-naked limbs. The Thénardiess raised her arm.

"I beg your pardon, madame," said the man, "but I just now saw something fall out of the pocket of that little girl's apron and roll away. That may be it."

At the same time he stooped down and appeared to search on the floor for an instant.

"Just so, here it is," said he, rising.

And he handed a silver piece to the Thénardiess.

"Yes, that is it," said she.

That was not it, for it was a twenty-sous piece, but the Thénardiess found her profit in it. She put the piece in her pocket, and contented herself with casting a ferocious look at the child and saying:

"Don't let that happen again, ever."

Cosette went back to what the Thénardiess called "her hole," and her large eyes fixed upon the unknown traveller, began to assume an expression that it had never known before. It was still only an artless astonishment, but a sort of blind confidence was associated with it.

A door now opened, and Eponine and Azelma came in.

They were really two pretty little girls, rather city girls than peasants, very charming, one with her well-polished auburn tresses, the other with her long black braids falling down her back, and both so lively, neat, plump, fresh, and healthy, that it was a pleasure to see them. They were warmly clad, but with such maternal art, that the thickness of the stuff detracted nothing from the coquetry of the fit. Winter was provided against without effacing spring. These two little girls shed light around them. Moreover, they were regnant. In their toilet, in their gaiety, in the noise they made, there was sovereignty. When they entered, the Thénardiess said to them in a scolding tone, which was full of adoration: "Ah! you are here then, you children!"

Then, taking them upon her knees one after the other, smoothing their hair, tying over their ribbons, and finally letting them go with that gentle sort of a shake which is peculiar to mothers, she exclaimed:

"Are they dowdies!"

They went and sat down by the fire. They had a doll which they turned backwards and forwards upon their knees with many pretty prattlings. From time to time, Cosette raised her eyes from her knitting, and looked sadly at them as they were playing.

Eponine and Azelma did not notice Cosette. To them she was like the dog. These three little girls could not count twenty-four years among them all, and they already represented all human society; on one side envy, on the other disdain.

The doll of the Thénardier sisters was very much faded, and very old and broken; and it appeared none the less wonderful to Cosette, who had never in her life had a doll, *a real doll,* to use an expression that all children will understand.

All at once, the Thénardiess who was continually going and coming about the room, noticed that Cosette's attention was distracted, and that instead of working she was busied with the little girls who were playing.

"Ah! I've caught you!" cried she. "That is the way you work! I'll make you work with a cowhide, I will."

The stranger, without leaving his chair, turned towards the Thénardiess.

"Madame," said he, smiling diffidently. "Pshaw! let her play!"

Cosette had left her knitting, but she had not moved from her place. Cosette always stirred as little as was possible. She had taken from a little box behind her a few old rags, and her little lead sword.

Eponine and Azelma paid no attention to what was going on. They had just performed a very important operation; they had caught the kitten. They had thrown the doll on the floor, and Eponine, the elder, was dressing the kitten, in spite of her miaulings and contortions, with a lot of clothes and red and blue rags. While she was engaged in this serious and difficult labour, she was talking to her sister in that sweet and charming language of children, the grace of which, like the splendour of butterfly's wings, escapes when we try to preserve it.

"Look! look, sister, this doll is more amusing than the other. She moves, she cries, she is warm. Come, sister, let us play with her. She shall be my little girl; I will be a lady. I'll come to see you, and you must look at her. By and by you must see her whiskers, and you must be surprised. And then you must see her ears, and then you must see her tail, and that will astonish you. And you must say to me: 'Oh! my stars!' and I will say to you, 'Yes, madame, it is a little girl that I have like that.' Little girls are like that now."

Azelma listened to Eponine with wonder.

As birds make a nest of anything, children make a doll of no matter what. While Eponine and Azelma were dressing up the cat, Cosette, for her part, had dressed up the sword. That done, she had laid it upon her arm, and was singing it softly to sleep.

The Thénardiess, on her part, approached the man.

"Monsieur," said she—

At this word *monsieur,* the man turned. The Thénardiess had called him before only *brave man* or *good man.*

"You see, monsieur," she pursued, putting on her sweetest look, which was still more unendurable than her ferocious manner, "I am very willing the child should play, I am not opposed to it; it is well for once, because you are generous. But, you see, she is poor; she must work."

"The child is not yours, then?" asked the man.

"Oh dear! no, monsieur! It is a little pauper that we have taken in through charity. A sort of imbecile child. She must have water on her brain. Her head is big, as you see. We do all we can for her, but we are not rich. We write in vain to her country; for six months we have had no answer. We think that her mother must be dead."

"Ah!" said the man, and he fell back into his reverie.

"This mother was no great things," added the Thénardiess. "She abandoned her child."

During this conversation, Cosette, as if an instinct had warned her that they were talking about her, had not taken her eyes from the Thénardiess. She listened. She heard a few words here and there.

All at once, Cosette stopped. She had just turned and seen the little Thénardiers' doll, which they had forsaken for the cat and left on the floor, a few steps from the kitchen table.

Then she let the bundled-up sword, that only half satisfied her, fall, and ran her eyes slowly around the room. The Thénardiess was whispering to her husband and counting some money, Eponine and

Azelma were playing with the cat, the travellers were eating or drinking or singing, nobody was looking at her. She had not a moment to lose. She crept out from under the table on her hands and knees, made sure once more that nobody was watching her, then darted quickly to the doll, and seized it. An instant afterwards she was at her place, seated, motionless, only turned in such a way as to keep the doll that she held in her arms in the shadow. The happiness of playing with a doll was so rare to her that it had all the violence of rapture.

Nobody had seen her, except the traveller, who was slowly eating his meagre supper.

This joy lasted for nearly a quarter of an hour.

But in spite of Cosette's precautions, she did not perceive that one of the doll's feet *stuck out,* and that the fire of the fireplace lighted it up very vividly. This rosy and luminous foot which protruded from the shadow suddenly caught Azelma's eye, and she said to Eponine: "Oh! sister!"

The two little girls stopped, stupefied; Cosette had dared to take the doll.

Eponine got up, and without letting go of the cat, went to her mother and began to pull at her skirt.

"Let me alone," said the mother; "what do you want?"

"Mother," said the child, "look there."

And she pointed at Cosette.

Cosette wholly absorbed in the ecstasy of her possession, saw and heard nothing else.

The face of the Thénardiess assumed the peculiar expression which is composed of the terrible mingled with the commonplace, and which has given this class of women the name of furies.

This time wounded pride exasperated her anger still more. Cosette had leaped over all barriers. Cosette had laid her hands upon the doll of "those young ladies." A czarina who had seen a moujik trying on the grand cordon of her imperial son would have had the same expression.

She cried with a voice hard with indignation:

"Cosette!"

Cosette shuddered as if the earth had quaked beneath her. She turned around.

"Cosette!" repeated the Thénardiess.

Cosette took the doll and placed it gently on the floor with a kind or veneration mingled with despair. Then, without taking away her eyes, she joined her hands, and, what is frightful to tell in a child of that age, she wrung them; then, what none of the emotions of the day had drawn from her, neither the run in the wood, nor the weight of the bucket of water, nor the loss of the money, nor the sight of the cowhide, nor even the stern words she had heard from the Thénardiess, she burst into tears. She sobbed.

Meanwhile the traveller arose.

"What is the matter?" said he to the Thénardiess.

"Don't you see?" said the Thénardiess, pointing with her finger to the *corpus delicti* lying at Cosette's feet.

"Well, what is that?" said the man.

"That beggar," answered the Thénardiess, "has dared to touch the children's doll."

"All this noise about that?" said the man. "Well, what if she did play with that doll?"

"She has touched it with her dirty hands!" continued the Thénardiess, "with her horrid hands!"

Here Cosette redoubled her sobs.

"Be still!" cried the Thénardiess

The man walked straight to the street door, opened it, and went out.

As soon as he had gone, the Thénardiess profited by his absence to give Cosette under the table a severe kick, which made the child shriek.

The door opened again, and the man reappeared, holding in his hands the fabulous doll of which we have spoken, and which had been the admiration of all the youngsters of the village since morning; he stood it up before Cosette, saying:

"Here, this is for you."

It is probable that during the time he had been there—more than an hour—in the midst of his reverie, he had caught confused glimpses of this toy-shop, lighted up with lamps and candles so splendidly that it shone through the bar-room window like an illumination.

Cosette raised her eyes: she saw the man approach her with the doll as she would have seen the sun approach, she heard those astounding words: *This is for you.* She looked at him, she looked at the doll, then she drew back slowly, and went and hid as far as she could under the table in the corner of the room.

She wept no more, she cried no more, she had the appearance of no longer daring to breathe.

The Thénardiess, Eponine, and Azelma were so many statues. Even the drinkers stopped. There was a solemn silence in the whole bar-room.

The Thénardiess, petrified and mute, recommenced her conjectures anew: "What is this old fellow? is he a pauper? is he a millionare? Perhaps he's both, that is a robber."

The face of the husband Thénardier presented that expressive wrinkle which marks the human countenance whenever the dominant instinct appears in it with all its brutal power. The innkeeper contemplated by turns the doll and the traveller; he seemed to be scenting this man as he would have scented a bag of money. This only lasted for a moment. He approached his wife and whispered to her:

"That machine cost at least thirty francs. No nonsense. Down on your knees before the man!"

Coarse natures have this in common with artless natures, that they have no transitions.

"Well, Cosette," said the Thénardiess in a voice which was meant to be sweet, and which was entirely composed of the sour honey of vicious women, "a'n't you going to take your doll?"

Cosette ventured to come out of her hole.

"My little Cosette," said Thénardier with a caressing air, "Monsieur gives you a doll. Take it. It is yours."

Cosette looked upon the wonderful doll with a sort of terror. Her face was still flooded with tears, but her eyes began to fill, like the sky in the breaking of the dawn, with strange radiations of joy. What she experienced at that moment was almost like what she would have felt if someone had said to her suddenly: Little girl, you are queen of France.

It seemed to her that if she touched that doll, thunder would spring forth from it.

Which was true to some extent, for she thought that the Thénardiess would scold and beat her.

However the attraction overcame her. She finally approached and timidly murmured, turning towards the Thénardiess:

"Can I, madame?"

No expression can describe her look, at once full of despair, dismay, and transport.

"Good Lord!" said the Thénardiess, "it is yours. Since monsieur gives it to you."

"Is it true, is it true, monsieur?" said Cosette; "is the lady for me?"

The stranger appeared to have his eyes full of tears. He seemed to be at that stage of emotion in which one does not speak for fear of weeping. He nodded assent to Cosette, and put the hand of "the lady" in her little hand.

Cosette withdrew her hand hastily, as if that of *the lady* burned her, and looked down at the floor. We are compelled to add, that at that instant she thrust out her tongue enormously. All at once she turned, and seized the doll eagerly.

"I will call her Catharine," said she.

It was a strange moment when Cosette's rags met and pressed against the ribbons and the fresh pink muslins of the doll.

"Madame," said she, "may I put her in a chair?"

"Yes, my child," answered the Thénardiess.

It was Eponine and Azelma now who looked upon Cosette with envy.

Cosette placed Catharine on a chair, then sat down on the floor before her, and remained motionless, without saying a word, in the attitude of contemplation.

"Why don't you play, Cosette?" said the stranger.

"Oh! I am playing," answered the child.

This stranger, this unknown man, who seemed like a visit from Providence to Cosette, was at that moment the being which the Thénardiess hated more than aught else in the world. However she was compelled to restrain herself. Her emotions were more than she could endure, accustomed as she was to dissimulation, by endeavouring to copy her husband in all her actions. She sent her daughters to bed immediately, then asked the yellow man's *permission* to send Cosette to bed—*who is very tired to-day,* added she, with a motherly air. Cosette went to bed, holding Catharine in her arms.

Several hours passed away. The midnight mass was said, the revel was finished, the drinkers had gone, the house was closed, the room was deserted, the fire had gone out, the stranger still remained in the same place and in the same posture. From time to time he changed the elbow on which he rested. That was all. But he had not spoken a word since Cosette was gone.

The Thénardiers alone, out of propriety and curiosity, had remained in the room.

Finally, Thénardier took off his cap, approached softly, and ventured to say:—

"Is monsieur not going to repose?"

Not going to bed would have seemed to him too much and too familiar. To *repose* implied luxury, and there was respect in it. Such words have the mysterious and wonderful property of swelling the bill in the morning. A room in which you *go to bed* costs twenty sous; a room in which you *repose* costs twenty francs.

"Yes," said the stranger, "you are right. Where is your stable?"

"Monsieur," said Thénardier, with a smile, "I will conduct monsieur."

He took the candle, the man took his bundle and his staff, and Thénardier led him into a room on the first floor, which was very showy, furnished all in mahogany, with a high-post bedstead and red calico curtains.

"What is this?" said the traveller.

"It is properly our bridal chamber," said the innkeeper. "We occupy another like this, my spouse and I; this is not open more than three or four times a year."

"I should have liked the stable as well," said the man, bluntly.

Thénardier did not appear to hear this not very civil answer.

He lighted two entirely new wax candles, which were displayed upon the mantel; a good fire was blazing in the fireplace. There was on the mantel, under a glass case, a woman's head-dress of silver thread and orange-flowers.

"What is this?" said the stranger.

"Monsieur," said Thénardier, it is my wife's bridal cap."

The traveller looked at the object with a look which seemed to say: "There was a moment, then, when this monster was a virgin."

Thénardier lied, however. When he hired this shanty to turn it into a chop-house, he found the room thus furnished, and bought this furniture, and purchased at second-hand these orange-flowers, thinking that this would cast a gracious light over "his spouse," and that the house would derive from them what the English call respectability.

When the traveller turned again the host had disappeared. Thénardier had discreetly taken himself out of the way without daring to say good-night, not desiring to treat with a disrespectful cordiality a man whom he proposed to skin royally in the morning.

The innkeeper retired to this room; his wife was in bed, but not asleep. When she heard her husband's step, she turned towards him, and said:

"You know that I am going to kick Cosette out doors to-morrow!"

Thénardier coolly answered:

"You are, indeed!"

They exchanged no further words, and in a few moments their candle was blown out.

For his part, the traveller had put his staff and bundle in a corner. The host gone, he sat down in an arm-chair, and remained some time thinking. Then he drew off his shoes, took one of the two candles, blew out the other, pushed open the door, and went out of the room, looking about him as if he were searching for something. He passed through a hall, and came to the stairway. There he heard a very soft little sound, which resembled the breathing of a child. Guided by this sound he came to a sort of triangular nook built under the stairs, or, rather, formed by the staircase itself. This hole was nothing but the space beneath the stairs. There, among all sorts of old baskets and old rubbish, in the dust and among the cobwebs, there was a bed; if a mattress so full of holes as to show the straw, and a covering so full of holes as to show the mattress, can be called a bed. There were no sheets. This was placed on the floor immediately on the tiles. In this bed Cosette was sleeping.

The man approached and looked at her.

Cosette was sleeping soundly; she was dressed. In the winter she did not undress on account of the cold. She held the doll clasped in her arms; its large open eyes shone in the obscurity. From time to time she heaved a deep sigh, as if she were about to wake, and she hugged the doll almost convulsively. There was only one of her wooden shoes at the side of her bed. An open door near Cosette's nook disclosed a large dark room. The stranger entered. At the further end, through a glass window, he perceived two little beds with very white spreads. They were those of Azelma and Eponine. Half hid behind these beds was a willow cradle without curtains, in which the little boy who had cried all the evening was sleeping.

The stranger conjectured that this room communicated with that of the Thénardiers. He was about to withdraw when his eye fell upon the fireplace, one of those huge tavern fireplaces where there is always so little fire, when there is a fire, and which are so cold to look upon. In this one there was no fire, there were not even any ashes. What there was, however, attracted the traveller's attention. It was two little children's shoes, of coquettish shape and of different sizes. The traveller remembered the graceful and immemorial custom of children putting their shoes in the fireplace on Christmas night, to wait there in the darkness in expectation of some shining gift from their good fairy. Eponine and Azelma had taken good care not to forget this, and each had put one of her shoes in the fireplace.

The traveller bent over them.

The fairy—that is to say, the mother—had already made her visit, and shining in each shoe was a beautiful new ten-sous piece.

The man rose up and was on the point of going away, when he perceived further along, by itself, in the darkest corner of the fireplace, another object. He looked, and recognised a shoe, a horrid wooden shoe of the clumsiest sort, half broken and covered with ashes and dried mud. It was Cosette's shoe. Cosette, with that touching confidence of childhood which can always be deceived without ever being discouraged, had also placed her shoe in the fireplace.

What a sublime and sweet thing is hope in a child who has never known anything but despair!

There was nothing in this wooden shoe.

The stranger fumbled in his waitscoat, bent over, and dropped into Cosette's shoe a gold Louis.

Then he went back to his room with stealthy tread.

THÉNARDIER MANŒUVRING

On the following morning, at least two hours before day, Thénardier, seated at a table in the bar-room, a candle by his side, with pen in hand, was making out the bill of the traveller in the yellow coat.

His wife was standing, half bent over him, following him with her eyes. Not a word passed between them. It was, on one side, a profound meditation, on the other that religious admiration with which we observe a marvel of the human mind spring up and expand. A noise was heard in the house; it was the lark, sweeping the stairs.

After a good quarter of an hour and some erasures, Thénardier produced this masterpiece.

THÉNARDIER MANŒUVRING

Supper	3 frs.
Room	10 "
Candle	5 "
Fire	4 "
Service	1 "
Total	23 frs.

Service was written *servisse.*

"Twenty-three francs!" exclaimed the woman, with an enthusiasm which was mingled with some hesitation.

Like all great artists, Thénardier was not satisfied.

"Pooh!" said he.

It was the accent of Castlereagh drawing up for the Congress of Vienna the bill which France was to pay.

"Monsieur Thénardier, you are right, he deserves it," murmured the woman, thinking of the doll given to Cosette in the presence of her daughters; "it is right! but it's too much. He won't pay it."

Thénardier put on his cold laugh, and said: "He will pay it."

This laugh was the highest sign of certainty and authority. What was thus said, must be. The woman did not insist. She began to arrange the tables; the husband walked back and forth in the room. A moment after he added:

"I owe, at least, fifteen hundred francs!"

He seated himself thoughtfully in the chimney corner, his feet in the warm ashes.

"Ah ha!" replied the woman, "you don't forget that I kick Cosette out of the house to-day? The monster! it tears my vitals to see her with her doll! I would rather marry Louis XVIII. than keep her in the house another day!"

Thénardier lighted his pipe, and answered between two puffs:

"You'll give the bill to the man."

Then he went out.

He was scarcely out of the room when the traveller came in.

Thénardier reappeared immediately behind him, and remained motionless in the half-open door, visible only to his wife.

The man carried his staff and bundle in his hand.

"Up so soon!" said the Thénardiess; "is monsieur going to leave us already?"

While speaking, she turned the bill in her hands with an embarrassed look, and made creases in it with her nails. Her hard face exhibited a shade of timidity and doubt that was not habitual.

To present such a bill to a man who had so perfectly the appearance of "a pauper" seemed too awkward to her.

The traveller appeared pre-occupied and absent-minded.

He answered:

"Yes, madame, I am going away."

"Monsieur, then, had no business at Montfermeil?" replied she.

"No, I am passing through; that is all. Madame," added he, "what do I owe?"

The Thénardiess, without answering, handed him the folded bill.

The man unfolded the paper and looked at it; but his thoughts were evidently elsewhere.

"Madame," replied he, "do you do a good business in Montfermeil?"

"So-so, monsieur," answered the Thénardiess, stupefied at seeing no other explosion.

She continued in a mournful and lamenting strain:

"Oh! monsieur, the times are very hard, and then we have so few rich people around here! It is a very little place, you see. If we only had rich travellers now and then, like monsieur! We have so many expenses! Why, that little girl eats us out of house and home."

"What little girl?"

"Why, the little girl you know! Cosette! the lark, as they call her about here!"

"Ah!" said the man.

She continued:

"How stupid these peasants are with their nicknames! She looks more like a bat than a lark. You see, monsieur, we don't ask charity, but we are not able to give it. We make nothing, and have a great deal to pay. The licence, the excise, the doors and windows, the tax on everything! Monsieur knows that the government demands a deal of money. And then I have my own girls. I have nothing to spend on other people's children."

The man replied in a voice which he endeavoured to render indifferent, and in which there was a slight tremulousness.

"Suppose you were relieved of her?"

"Who? Cosette?"

"Yes."

The red and violent face of the woman became illumined with a hideous expression.

"Ah, monsieur! my good monsieur! take her, keep her, take her away, carry her off, sugar her, stuff her, drink her, eat her, and be blessed by the holy Virgin and all the saints in Paradise!"

"Agreed."

"Really! you will take her away?"

"I will."

"Immediately?"

"Immediately. Call the child."

"Cosette!" cried the Thénardiess.

"In the meantime," continued the man, "I will pay my bill. How much is it?"

He cast a glance at the bill, and could not repress a movement of surprise.

"Twenty-three francs?"

He looked at the hostess and repeated:

"Twenty-three francs?"

There was, in the pronunciation of these two sentences, thus repeated, the accent which lies between the point of exclamation and the point of interrogation.

The Thénardiess had had time to prepare herself for the shock. She replied with assurance:

"Yes, of course, monsieur! it is twenty-three francs."

The stranger placed five five-franc pieces upon the table.

"Go for the little girl," said he.

At this moment Thénardier advanced into the middle of the room and said:

"Monsieur owes twenty-six sous."

"Twenty-six sous!" exclaimed the woman.

"Twenty sous for the room," continued Thénardier coldly, "and six for supper. As to the little girl, I must have some talk with monsieur about that. Leave us, wife."

The Thénardiess was dazzled by one of those unexpected flashes which emanate from talent. She felt that the great actor had entered upon the scene, answered not a word, and went out.

As soon as they were alone, Thénardier offered the traveller a chair. The traveller sat down, but Thénardier remained standing, and his face assumed a singular expression of good-nature and simplicity.

"Monsieur," said he, "listen, I must say that I adore this child."

The stranger looked at him steadily.

"What child?"

Thénardier continued:

"How strangely we become attached! What is all this silver? Take back your money. This child I adore."

"Who is that?" asked the stranger.

"Oh, our little Cosette! And you wish to take her away from us? Indeed, I speak frankly, as true as you are an honourable man, I cannot consent to it. I should miss her. I have had her since she was very small. It is true, she costs us money; it is true she has her faults, it is true we are not rich, it is true I paid four hundred francs for medicines at one time when she was sick. But we must do something for God. She has neither father nor mother; I have brought her up. I have bread enough for her and for myself. In fact, I must keep this child. You understand, we have affections; I am a good beast; myself; I do not reason; I love this little girl; my wife is hasty, but she loves her also. You see, she is like our own child. I feel the need of her prattle in the house."

The stranger was looking steadily at him all the while. He continued:

"Pardon me, excuse me, monsieur, but one does not give his child like that to a traveller. Isn't it true that I am right? After that, I don't say—you are rich and have the appearance of a very fine man—if it is for her advantage,—but I must know about it. You understand? On the supposition that I should let her go and sacrifice my own feelings, I should want to know where she is going. I would not want to lose sight of her, I should want to know who she was with, that I might come and see her now and then, and that she might know that her good foster-father was still watching over her. Finally, there are things which are not possible. I do not know even your name. If you should take her away, I should say, alas for the little Lark, where has she gone? I must, at least see some poor rag of paper, a bit of a passport, something."

The stranger, without removing from him this gaze which went, so to speak, to the bottom of his conscience, answered in a severe and firm tone:

"Monsieur Thénardier, people do not take a passport to come five leagues from Paris. If I take Cosette, I take her, that is all. You will not know my name, you will not know my abode, you will not know where she goes, and my intention is that she shall never see you again in her life. Do you agree to that? Yes or no?"

"Monsieur," said he, "I must have fifteen hundred francs."

The stranger took from his side-pocket an old black leather pocket-book, opened it, and drew forth three bank bills which he placed upon the table. He then rested his large thumb on these bills, and said to the tavern-keeper.

"Bring Cosette."

An instant after, Cosette entered the bar-room.

The stranger took the bundle he had brought and untied it. This bundle contained a little woollen frock, an apron, a coarse cotton under-garment, a petticoat, a scarf, woollen stockings, and shoes—a complete dress for a girl of seven years. It was all in black.

"My child," said the man, "take this and go and dress yourself quick."

The day was breaking when those of the inhabitants of Montfermeil who were beginning to open their doors, saw pass on the road to Paris a poorly clad goodman leading a little girl dressed in mourning who had a pink doll in her arms. They were going towards Livry.

It was the stranger and Cosette.

No one recognised the man; as Cosette was not now in tatters, few recognised her.

Cosette was going away. With whom? She was ignorant. Where? She knew not. All she understood was, that she was leaving behind the Thénardier chop-house. Nobody had thought of bidding her good-by, nor had she of bidding good-by to anybody. She went out from that house, hated and hating.

Poor gentle being, whose heart had only been crushed hitherto.

Cosette walked seriously along, opening her large eyes, and looking at the sky. She had put her louis in the pocket of her new apron. From time to time she bent over and cast a glance at it, and then looked at the goodman. She felt somewhat as if she were near God.

WHO SEEKS THE BEST MAY FIND THE WORST

The Thénardiess, according to her custom, had left her husband alone. She was expecting great events. When the man and Cosette were gone, Thénardier, after a good quarter of an hour, took her aside, and showed her the fifteen hundred francs.

"What's that?" said she.

It was the first time, since the beginning of their housekeeping, that she had dared to criticise the act of her master.

He felt the blow.

"True, you are right," said he; I am a fool. Give me my hat."

He folded the three bank bills, thrust them into his pocket, and started in all haste, but he missed the direction and took the road to the right. Some neighbours of whom he inquired put him on the track; the Lark and the man had been seen to go in the direction of

Livry. He followed this indication, walking rapidly and talking to himself.

"This man is evidently a millionaire dressed in yellow, and as for me, I am a brute. He first gave twenty sous, then five francs, then fifty francs, then fifteen hundred francs, all so readily. He would have given fifteen thousand francs. But I shall catch him."

And then this bundle of clothes, made ready beforehand for the little girl; all that was strange, there was a good deal of mystery under it. When one gets hold of a mystery, he does not let go of it. The secrets of the rich are sponges full of gold; a man ought to know how to squeeze them. All these thoughts were whirling in his brain. "I am a brute," said he.

On leaving Montfermeil and reaching the turn made by the road to Livry, the route may be seen for a long distance on the plateau. On reaching this point he counted on being able to see the man and the little girl. He looked as far as his eye could reach, but saw nothing. He inquired again. In the meanwhile he was losing time. The passer-by told him that the man and child whom he sought had travelled towards the wood in the direction of Gagny. He hastened in this direction.

They had the start of him, but a child walks slowly, and he went rapidly. And then the country was well known to him.

Suddenly he stopped and struck his forehead like a man who has forgotten the main thing, and who thinks of retracing his steps.

"I ought to have taken my gun!" said he.

Thénardier was one of those double natures who sometimes appear among us without our knowledge, and disappear without ever being known, because destiny has shown us but one side of them. It is the fate of many men to live thus half submerged. In a quiet ordinary situation, Thénardier had all that is necessary to make—we do not say to be—what passes for an honest tradesman, a good citizen. At the same time, under certain circumstances, under the operation of certain occurrences exciting his baser nature, he had in him all that was necessary to be a villain. He was a shopkeeper, in which lay hidden a monster. Satan ought for a moment to have squatted in some corner of the hole in which Thénardier lived and studied this hideous masterpiece.

After hesitating an instant:

"Bah!" thought he, "they would have time to escape!"

And he continued on his way, going rapidly forward, and almost as if he were certain, with the sagacity of the fox scenting a flock of partridges.

In fact, when he had passed the ponds, and crossed obliquely the large meadow at the right of the avenue de Bellevue, as he reached the grassy path which nearly encircles the hill, and which covers the arch of the old aqueduct of the abbey of Chelles, he perceived above a bush, the hat on which he had already built so many conjectures. It was the man's hat. The bushes were low. Thénardier perceived that the man and Cosette were seated there. The child could not be seen, she was so short, but he could see the head of the doll.

Thénardier was not deceived. The man had sat down there to give Cosette a little rest. The chop-house keeper turned aside the bushes, and suddenly appeared before the eyes of those whom he sought.

"Pardon me, excuse me, monsieur," said he, all out of breath; "but here are your fifteen hundred francs."

So saying, he held out the three bank bills to the stranger.

The man raised his eyes:

"What does that mean?"

Thénardier answered respectfully:

"Monsieur, that means that I take back Cosette."

Cosette shuddered, and hugged close to the goodman.

He answered, looking Thénardier straight in the eyes, and spacing his syllables.

"You—take—back—Cosette?"

"Yes, monsieur, I take her back. I tell you I have reflected. Indeed, I haven't the right to give her to you. I am an honest man, you see. This little girl is not mine. She belongs to her mother. Her mother has confided her to me; I can only give her up to her mother. You will tell me: But her mother is dead. Well. In that case, I can only give up the child to a person who shall bring me a written order, signed by the mother, stating I should deliver the child to him. That is clear."

The man, without answering, felt in his pocket, and Thénardier saw the pocket-book containing the bank bills reappear.

The tavern-keeper felt a thrill of joy.

"Good!" thought he; "hold on. He is going to corrupt me!"

Before opening the pocket-book, the traveller cast a look about him. The place was entirely deserted. There was not a soul either in the wood, or in the valley. The man opened the pocket-book, and drew from it, not the handful of bank-bills which Thénardier expected, but a little piece of paper, which he unfolded and presented open to the innkeeper, saying:

"You are right. Read that!"

Thénardier took the paper and read.

"M—— sur M——, March 25, 1823.

"Monsieur Thénardier:

"You will deliver Cosette to the bearer. He will settle all small debts.

"I have the honour to salute you with consideration.

"Fantine."

"You know that signature?" replied the man.

It was indeed the signature of Fantine. Thénardier recognised it.

There was nothing to say. He felt doubly enraged, enraged at being compelled to give up the bribe which he hoped for, and enraged at being beaten. The man added:

"You can keep this paper as your receipt."

Thénardier retreated in good order.

"This signature is very well imitated," he grumbled between his teeth. "Well, so be it!"

Then he made a desperate effort.

"Monsieur," said he, "it is all right. Then you are the person. But you must settle 'all small debts.' There is a large amount due to me."

The man rose to his feet, and said at the same time, snapping with his thumb and finger some dust from his threadbare sleeve:

"Monsieur Thénardier, in January the mother reckoned that she owed you a hundred and twenty francs; you sent her in February a memorandum of five hundred francs; you received three hundred francs at the end of February, and three hundred at the beginning of March. There has since elapsed nine months which, at fifteen francs per month, the price agreed upon, amounts to a hundred and thirty-five francs. You had received a hundred francs in advance. There remain thirty-five francs due you. I have just given you fifteen hundred francs."

Thénardier felt what the wolf feels the moment when he finds himself seized and crushed by the steel jaws of the trap.

"What is this devil of a man?" thought he.

He did what the wolf does, he gave a spring. Audacity had succeeded with him once already.

"Monsieur-I-don't-know-your-name," said he resolutely, and putting aside this time all show of respect. "I shall take back Cosette or you must give me a thousand crowns."

The stranger said quietly:

"Come, Cosette."

He took Cosette with his left hand, and with the right picked up his staff, which was on the ground.

Thénardier noted the enormous size of the cudgel, and the solitude of the place.

The man disappeared in the wood with the child, leaving the chop-house keeper motionless and non-plussed.

As they walked away, Thénardier observed his broad shoulders, a little rounded, and his big fists.

Then his eyes fell back upon his own puny arms and thin hands. "I must have been a fool indeed," thought he, "not to have brought my gun, as I was going on a hunt."

However, the innkeeper did not abandon the pursuit.

"I must know where he goes," said he; and he began to follow them at a distance. There remained two things in his possession, one a bitter mockery, the piece of paper signed *Fantine,* and the other a consolation, the fifteen hundred francs.

The man was leading Cosette in the direction of Livry and Bondy. He was walking slowly, his head bent down, in an attitude of reflection and sadness. The winter had bereft the wood of foliage, so that Thénardier did not lose sight of them, though remaining at a considerable distance behind. From time to time the man turned, and looked to see if he were followed. Suddenly he perceived Thénardier. He at once entered a coppice with Cosette, and both disappeared from sight. "The devil!" said Thénardier. And he redoubled his pace.

The density of the thicket compelled him to approach them. When the man reached the thickest part of the wood, he turned again. Thénardier had endeavoured to conceal himself in the branches in vain, he could not prevent the man from seeing him. The man cast an uneasy glance at him, then shook his head, and resumed his journey. The innkeeper again took up the pursuit. They walked thus two or three hundred paces. Suddenly the man turned again. He perceived the innkeeper. This time he looked at him so forbiddingly that Thénardier judged it "unprofitable" to go further. Thénardier went home.

NUMBER 9430 COMES UP AGAIN, AND COSETTE DRAWS IT

Jean Valjean was not dead.

When he fell into the sea, or rather when he threw himself into it, he was, as we have seen, free from his irons. He swam under water to a ship at anchor to which a boat was fastened.

He found means to conceal himself in this boat until evening. At night he betook himself again to the water, and reached the land a short distance from Cape Brun.

There, as he did not lack for money, he could procure clothes. A little public-house in the environs of Balaguier was then the place which supplied clothing for escaped convicts, a lucrative business. Then Jean Valjean, like all those joyless fugitives who are endeavouring to throw off the track the spy of the law and social fatality, followed an obscure and wandering path. He found an asylum first in Pradeaux, near Beausset. Then he went towards Grand Villard, near Briançon, in the Hautes Alpes. Groping and restless flight, threading the mazes of the mole whose windings are unknown. There were afterwards found some trace of his passage in Ain, on the territory of Civrieux, in the Pyrenees at Accons, at a place called the Grange-de-Domecq, near the hamlet of Chavailles, and in the environs of Périgneux, at Brunies, a canton of Chapelle Gonaguet. He finally reached Paris. We have seen him at Montfermeil.

His first care, on reaching Paris, had been to purchase a mourning dress for a little girl of seven years, then to procure lodgings. That done, he had gone to Montfermeil.

At the time of his former escape, or near that time, he had made a mysterious journey of which justice had had some glimpse.

Moreover, he was believed to be dead, and that thickened the obscurity which surrounded him. At Paris there fell into his hands a paper which chronicled the fact. He felt reassured, and almost at peace as if he really had been dead.

On the evening of the same day that Jean Valjean had rescued Cosette from the clutches of the Thénardiess, he entered Paris again. He entered the city at night-fall, with the child, by the barrière de Monceaux. There he took a cabriolet, which carried him as far as the esplanade of the Observatory. There he got out, paid the driver, took Cosette by the hand, and both in the darkness of the night, through the deserted streets in the vicinity of l'Ourcine and la Glacière, walked towards the boulevard de l'Hôpital.

The day had been strange and full of emotion for Cosette; they had eaten behind hedges bread and cheese bought at isolated chop-houses; they had often changed carriages, and had travelled short distances on foot. She did not complain; but she was tired, and Jean Valjean perceived it by her pulling more heavily at his hand while walking. He took her in his arms; Cosette, without letting go of Catharine, laid her head on Jean Valjean's shoulder, and went to sleep.

BOOK IV—THE OLD GORBEAU HOUSE

A NEST FOR OWL AND WREN

Before the Gorbeau tenement Jean Valjean stopped. Like the birds of prey, he had chosen this lonely place to make his nest.

He fumbled in his waistcoat and took from it a sort of night-key, opened the door, entered, then carefully closed it again and ascended the stairway, still carrying Cosette.

At the top of the stairway he drew from his pocket another key, with which he opened another door. The chamber which he entered and closed again immediately was a sort of garret, rather spacious, furnished only with a mattress spread on the floor, a table and a few chairs. A stove containing a fire, the coals of which were visible, stood in one corner. The street lamp of the boulevard shed a dim light through this poor interior. At the further extremity there was a little room containing a cot bed. On this Jean Valjean laid the child without waking her.

He struck a light with flint and steel and lit a candle, which, with his tinder-box, stood ready beforehand, on the table; and, as he had done on the preceding evening, he began to gaze upon Cosette with a look of ecstasy, in which the expression of goodness and tenderness went almost to the verge of insanity. The little girl, with that tranquil confidence which belongs only to extreme strength or extreme weakness, had fallen asleep without knowing with whom she was, and continued to slumber without knowing where she was.

Jean Valjean bent down and kissed the child's hand.

Nine months before, he had kissed the hand of the mother, who also had just fallen asleep.

The same mournful, pious, agonising feeling now filled his heart.

He knelt down by the bedside of Cosette.

It was broad daylight, and yet the child slept on. A pale ray from the December sun struggled through the garret window and traced upon the ceiling long streaks of light and shade. Suddenly a carrier's waggon, heavily laden, trundled over the cobble-stones of the boulevard, and shook the old building like the rumbling of a tempest, jarring it from cellar to roof-tree.

"Yes, madame!" cried Cosette, starting up out of sleep, "here I am! here I am!"

And she threw herself from the bed, her eyelids still half closed with the weight of slumber, stretching out her hand towards the corner of the wall.

"Oh! what shall I do? Where is my broom?" said she.

By this time her eyes were fully open, and she saw the smiling face of Jean Valjean.

"Oh! yes—so it is!" said the child. "Good morning, monsieur."

Children at once accept joy and happiness with quick familiarity, being themselves naturally all happiness and joy.

Cosette noticed Catharine at the foot of the bed, laid hold of her at once, and, playing the while, asked Jean Valjean a thousand questions.—Where was she? Was Paris a big place? Was Madame Thénardier really far away? Wouldn't she come back again, etc., etc. All at once she exclaimed, "How pretty it is here!"

It was a frightful hovel, but she felt free.

"Must I sweep?" she continued at length.

"Play!" replied Jean Valjean.

And thus the day passed by. Cosette without troubling herself with trying to understand anything about it, was inexpressibly happy with her doll and her good friend.

TWO MISFORTUNES MINGLED MAKE HAPPINESS

The dawn of the next day found Jean Valjean again near the bed of Cosette. He waited there, motionless, to see her wake.

Something new was entering his soul.

Jean Valjean had never loved anything. For twenty-five years he had been alone in the world. He had never been a father, lover, husband, or friend. At the galleys, he was cross, sullen, abstinent, ignorant, and intractable. The heart of the old convict was full of freshness. His sister and her children had left in his memory only a vague and distant impression, which had finally almost entirely vanished. He had made every exertion to find them again, and, not succeeding, had forgotten them. Human nature is thus constituted. The other tender emotions of his youth, if any such he had, were lost in an abyss.

When he saw Cosette, when he had taken her, carried her away, and rescued her, he left his heart moved. All that he had of feeling and affection was aroused and vehemently attracted towards this child. He would approach the bed where she slept, and would tremble there with delight; he felt inward yearnings, like a mother, and knew not what they were; for it is something very incomprehensible and very sweet, this grand and strange emotion of a heart in its first love.

Poor old heart, so young!

But, as he was fifty-five, and Cosette was but eight years old, all that he might have felt of love in his entire life melted into a sort of ineffable radiance.

This was the second white vision he had seen. The bishop had caused the dawn of virtue on his horizon; Cosette evoked the dawn of love.

The first few days rolled by amid this bewilderment.

In the meanwhile, Jean Valjean had well chosen his hiding-place. He was there in a state of security that seemed to be complete.

The apartment with the side chamber which he occupied with Cosette, was the one whose window looked out upon the boulevard. This window being the only one in the house, there was no neighbour's prying eye to fear either from that side or opposite.

The lower floor of No. 50–52 was a sort of dilapidated shed; it served as a sort of stable for market gardeners, and had no communication with the upper floor. It was separated from it by the flooring, which had neither stairway nor trap-door, and was, as it were, the diaphragm of the old building. The upper floor contained several rooms and a few lofts, only one of which was occupied—by an old woman, who was maid of all work to Jean Valjean. All the rest was uninhabited.

It was this old woman, honoured with the title of landlady, but, in reality, intrusted with the functions of portress, who had rented him these lodgings on Christmas Day. He had passed himself off to her as a gentleman of means, ruined by the Spanish Bonds, who was going to live there with his granddaughter. He had paid her for six months in advance, and engaged the old dame to furnish the chamber and the little bedroom, as we have described them. This old woman it was who had kindled the fire in the stove and made everything ready for them, on the evening of their arrival.

Weeks rolled by. These two beings led in that wretched shelter a happy life.

From the earliest dawn, Cosette laughed, prattled, and sang. Children have their morning song, like birds.

Sometimes it happened that Jean Valjean would take her little red hand, all chapped and frost-bitten as it was, and kiss it. The poor child, accustomed only to blows, had no idea what this meant, and would draw back ashamed.

At times, she grew serious and looked musingly at her little black dress. Cosette was no longer in rags; she was in mourning. She was issuing from utter poverty and was entering upon life.

Jean Valjean had begun to teach her to read. Sometimes, while teaching the child to spell, he would remember that it was with the intention of accomplishing evil that he had learned to read, in the galleys. This intention had now been changed into teaching a child to read. Then the old convict would smile with the pensive smile of angels.

He felt in this a pre-ordination from on high, a volition of some one more than man, and he would lose himself in reverie. Good thoughts as well as bad have their abysses.

To teach Cosette to read, and to watch her playing, was nearly all Jean Valjean's life. And then, he would talk to her about her mother, and teach her to pray.

She called him *Father,* and knew him by no other name.

WHAT THE LANDLADY DISCOVERED

Jean Valjean was prudent enough never to go out in the daytime. Every evening, however, about twilight, he would walk for an hour or two, sometimes alone, often with Cosette, selecting the most unfrequented side alleys of the boulevards and going into the churches at nightfall. He was fond of going to St. Médard, which is the nearest church. When he did not take Cosette, she remained with the old woman; but it was the child's delight to go out with her kind old friend. She preferred an hour with him even to her delicious *tête-à-têtes* with Catharine. He would walk along holding her by the hand, and telling her pleasant things. It turned out that Cosette was very playful. The old woman was housekeeper and cook, and did the marketing. They lived frugally, always with a little fire in the stove, but like people in embarrassed circumstances. Jean Valjean made no change in the furniture described on the first day, excepting that he caused a solid door to be put up in place of the glass door of Cosette's little bed-chamber.

He still wore his yellow coat, his black pantaloons and his old hat. On the street he was taken for a beggar. It sometimes happened that kind-hearted dames, in passing, would turn and hand him a penny. Jean Valjean accepted the penny and bowed humbly. It chanced, sometimes, also, that he would meet some wretched creature begging alms, and then, glancing about him to be sure that no one was looking, he would stealthily approach the beggar, slip a piece of money, often silver, into his hand, and walk rapidly away. This had its inconveniences. He began to be known in the quarter as *the beggar who gives alms.*

A FIVE-FRANC PIECE FALLING ON THE FLOOR MAKES A NOISE

There was, in the neighbourhood of Saint Médard, a beggar who sat crouching over the edge of a condemned public well near by, and to whom Jean Valjean often gave alms. He never passed this man without giving him a few pennies. Sometimes he spoke to him. Those who were envious of this poor creature said he was in the pay of the police. He was an old church beadle of seventy-five, who was always mumbling prayers.

One evening, as Jean Valjean was passing that way, unaccompanied by Cosette, he noticed the beggar sitting in his usual place, under the street lamp which had just been lighted. The man, according to custom, seemed to be praying and was bent over. Jean Valjean walked up to him, and put a piece of money in his hand, as usual. The beggar suddenly raised his eyes, gazed intently at Jean Valjean, and then quickly dropped his head. This movement was like a flash; Jean Valjean shuddered; it seemed to him that he had just seen, by the light of the street-lamp, not the calm sanctimonious face of the aged beadle, but a terrible and well-known countenance. He experienced the sensation one would feel on finding himself suddenly face to face, in the gloom, with a tiger. He recoiled, horror-stricken and petrified, daring neither to breathe nor to speak, to stay nor to fly, but gazing upon the beggar who had once more bent down his head, with its tattered covering, and seemed to be no longer conscious of his presence. At this singular moment, an instinct, perhaps the mysterious instinct of self-preservation, prevented Jean Valjean from uttering a word. The beggar had the same form, the same rags, the same general appearance as on every other day. "Pshaw!" said Jean Valjean to himself, "I am mad! I am dreaming! It cannot be!" And he went home, anxious and ill at ease.

He scarcely dared to admit, even to himself, that the countenance he thought he had seen was the face of Javert.

That night, upon reflection, he regretted that he had not questioned the man so as to compel him to raise his head a second time. On the morrow, at nightfall, he went thither, again. The beggar was in his place. "Good day! Good day!" said Jean Valjean, with firmness, as he gave him the accustomed alms. The beggar raised his head and answered in a whining voice: "Thanks, kind sir, thanks!" It was, indeed, only the old beadle.

Jean Valjean now felt reassured. He even began to laugh. "What the deuce was I about to fancy that I saw Javert," thought he; "is my sight growing poor already?" And he thought no more about it.

Some days after, it might be eight o'clock in the evening, he was in his room, giving Cosette her spelling lesson, which the child was repeating in a loud voice, when he heard the door of the building open and close again. That seemed odd to him. The old woman, the only occupant of the house beside himself and Cosette, always went to bed at dark to save candles. Jean Valjean made a sign to Cosette to be silent. He heard some one coming up stairs. Possibly, it might be the old woman who had felt unwell and had been to the druggist's. Jean Valjean listened. The footsteps was heavy, and sounded like a man's; but the old woman wore heavy shoes, and there is nothing so much like the step of a man as the step of an old woman. However, Jean Valjean blew out his candle.

He sent Cosette to bed, telling her in a suppressed voice to lie down very quietly—and, as he kissed her forehead, the footsteps stopped. Jean Valjean remained silent and motionless, his back turned towards the door, still seated on his chair from which he had not moved, and holding his breath in the darkness. After a considerable interval, not hearing anything more, he turned round without making any noise, and as he raised his eyes towards the door of his room, he saw a light through the keyhole. This ray of light was an evil star in the black background of the door and the wall. There was, evidently somebody outside with a candle who was listening.

A few minutes elapsed, and the light disappeared. But he heard no sound of footsteps, which seemed to indicate that whoever was listening at the door had taken off his shoes.

Jean Valjean threw himself on his bed without undressing, but could not shut his eyes that night.

At daybreak, as he was sinking into slumber from fatigue, he was aroused, again, by the creaking of the door of some room at the end of the hall, and then he heard the same footstep which had ascended the stairs, on the preceding night. The step approached. He started from his bed and placed his eye to the keyhole, which was quite a large one, hoping to get a glimpse of the person, whoever it might be, who had made his way into the building in the night-time and had listened at his door. It was a man, indeed, who passed by Jean Valjean's room, this time without stopping. The hall was still too dark for him to make out his features; but, when the man reached the stairs, a ray of light from without made his figure stand out like a profile, and Jean Valjean had a full view of his back. The man was tall, wore a long frock-coat, and had a cudgel under his arm. It was the redoubtable form of Javert.

Jean Valjean might have tried to get another look at him through his window that opened on the boulevard, but he would have to raise the sash, and that he dared not do.

It was evident that the man had entered by means of a key, as if at home. "Who, then, had given him the key?—and what was the meaning of this?"

At seven in the morning, when the old lady came to clear up the rooms, Jean Valjean eyed her sharply, but asked her no questions. The good dame appeared as usual.

While she was doing her sweeping, she said:—

"Perhaps monsieur heard some one come in, last night?"

At her age and on that boulevard, eight in the evening is the very darkest of the night.

"Ah! yes, by the way, I did," he answered in the most natural tone. "Who was it?"

"It's a new lodger," said the old woman," who has come into the house."

"And his name is——?"

"Well, I hardly recollect now. Dumont or Daumont.—Some sucl name as that."

"And what is he—this M. Daumont?"

The old woman studied him, a moment, through her little foxy eyes, and answered:

"He's a gentleman living on his income like you."

She may have intended nothing by this, but Jean Valjean thought he could make out that she did.

When the old woman was gone, he made a roll of a hundred francs he had in a drawer and put it into his pocket. Do what he would to manage this so that the clinking of the silver should not be heard, a five-franc piece escaped his grasp and rolled jingling away over the floor.

At dusk, he went to the street-door and looked carefully up and down the boulevard. No one was to be seen. The boulevard seemed to be utterly deserted. It is true that there might have been some one hidden behind a tree.

He went upstairs again.

"Come," said he to Cosette.

He took her by the hand and they both went out.

BOOK V—A DARK CHASE NEEDS A SILENT HOUND

THE ZIGZAGS OF STRATEGY

Jean Valjean knew, no more than Cosette, where he was going. He trusted in God, as she trusted in him. It seemed to him that he also held some one greater than himself by the hand; he believed he felt a being leading him, invisible. Finally, he had no definite idea, no plan, no project. He was not even absolutely sure that this was Javert, and then it might be Javert, and Javert not know that he was Jean Valjean. Was he not disguised? was he not supposed to be dead? Nevertheless, singular things had happened within the last few days. He wanted no more of them. He was determined not to enter Gorbeau House again. Like the animal hunted from his den, he was looking for a hole to hide in until he could find one to remain in.

Jean Valjean described many and varied labyrinths in the Quartier Mouffetard, which was asleep already as if it were still under the discipline of the middle age and the yoke of the curfew; he produced different combinations, in wise strategy, with the Rue Censier and the Rue Copeau, the Rue du Battoir Saint Victor and the Rue au Puits l'Ermite. There are lodgings in that region, but he did not even enter them, not finding what suited him. He had no doubt whatever that if, perchance, they had sought his track, they had lost it.

As eleven o'clock struck in the tower of Saint Etienne du Mont, he crossed the Rue de Pontoise in front of the bureau of the Commissary of Police, which is at No. 14. Some moments afterwards, the instinct of which we have already spoken made him turn his head. At this moment he saw distinctly—thanks to the commissary's lamp which revealed them—three men following him quite near, pass one after another under this lamp on the dark side of the street. One of these men entered the passage leading to the commissary's house. The one in advance appeared to him decidedly suspicious.

"Come, child!" said he to Cosette, and he made haste to get out of the Rue de Pontoise.

He made a circuit, went round the arcade des Patriarches, which was closed on account of the lateness of the hour, walked rapidly through the Rue de l'Epée-de-Bois and the Rue de l'Arbalète, and plunged into the Rue des Postes.

There was a square there, where the Collège Rollin now is, and from which branches off the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève.

(We need not say that the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève is an old street, and that there a postchaise did not pass once in ten years through the Rue des Postes. This Rue des Postes was in the thirteenth century inhabited by potters, and its true name is Rue des Pots.)

The moon lighted up this square brightly. Jean Valjean concealed himself in a doorway, calculating that if these men were still following him, he could not fail to get a good view of them when they crossed this lighted space.

In fact, three minutes had not elapsed when the men appeared. There were now four of them; all were tall, dressed in long brown coats, with round hats, and great clubs in their hands. They were not less fearfully forbidding by their size and their large fists than by their stealthy tread in the darkness. One would have taken them for four spectres in citizen's dress.

They stopped in the centre of the square and formed a group like people consulting. They appeared undecided. The man who seemed to be the leader turned and energetically pointed in the direction in which Jean Valjean was; one of the others seemed to insist with some obstinacy on the contrary direction. At the instant when the leader turned, the moon shone full in his face. Jean Valjean recognised Javert perfectly.

IT IS FORTUNATE THAT VEHICLES CAN CROSS THE BRIDGE OF AUSTERLITZ

Uncertainty was at an end for Jean Valjean; happily, it still continued with these men. He took advantage of their hesitation; it was time lost for them, gained for him. He came out from the doorway in which he was concealed, and made his way into the Rue des Postes towards the region of the Jardin des Plantes. Cosette began to be tired; he took her in his arms, and carried her. There was nobody in the streets, and the lamps had not been lighted on account of the moon.

He doubled his pace.

He passed through the Rue de la Clef, then by the Fontaine de Saint Victor along the Jardin des Plantes by the lower streets, and reached the quay. There he looked around. The quay was deserted. The streets were deserted. Nobody behind him. He took breath.

He arrived at the bridge of Austerlitz.

It was still a toll-bridge at this period.

He presented himself at the toll-house and gave a sous.

"It is two sous," said the toll-keeper. "You are carrying a child who can walk. Pay for two."

He paid, annoyed that his passage should have attracted observation. All flight should be a gliding.

A large cart was passing the Seine at the same time, and like him was going towards the right bank. This could be made of use. He could go the whole length of the bridge in the shade of this cart.

Towards the middle of the bridge, Cosette, her feet becoming numb, desired to walk. He put her down and took her by the hand.

The bridge passed, he perceived some wood-yards a little to the right

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HE CAME OUT FROM THE DOORWAY IN WHICH HE WAS CONCEALED, AND MADE HIS WAY INTO THE RUE DES POSTES

and walked in that direction. To get there, he must venture into a large clear open space. He did not hesitate. Those who followed him were evidently thrown off his track, and Jean Valjean believed himself out of danger. Sought for, he might be, but followed he was not.

A little street, the Rue du Chemin Vert Saint Antoine, opened between two wood-yards inclosed by walls. This street was narrow, obscure, and seemed made expressly for him. Before entering it, he looked back.

From the point where he was, he could see the whole length of the bridge of Austerlitz.

Four shadows, at that moment, entered upon the bridge.

These shadows were coming from the Jardin des Plantes towards the right bank.

These four shadows were the four men.

Jean Valjean felt a shudder like that of the deer when he sees the hounds again upon his track.

One hope was left for him; it was that these men had not entered upon the bridge, and had not perceived him when he crossed the large square clear space leading Cosette by the hand.

In that case, by plunging into the little street before him, if he could succeed in reaching the wood-yards, the marshes, the fields, the open grounds, he could escape.

It seemed to him that he might trust himself to this silent little street. He entered it.

SEE THE PLAN OF PARIS OF 1727

Some three hundred paces on, he reached a point where the street forked. It divided into two streets, the one turning off obliquely to the left, the other to the right. Jean Valjean had before him the two branches of a Y. Which should he choose?

He did not hesitate, but took the right.

Why?

Because the left branch led towards the faubourg—this is to say, towards the inhabited region, and the right branch towards the country—that is, towards the uninhabited region.

But now, they no longer walked very fast. Cosette's step slackened Jean Valjean's pace.

He took her up and carried her again. Cosette rested her head upon the goodman's shoulder, and did not say a word.

He turned, from time to time, and looked back. He took care to keep always on the dark side of the street. The street was straight behind him. The two or three first times he turned, he saw nothing; the silence was complete, and he kept on his way somewhat reassured. Suddenly, on turning again, he thought he saw in the portion of the street through which he had just passed, far in the obscurity, something which stirred.

He plunged forward rather than walked, hoping to find some side street by which to escape, and once more to elude his pursuers.

He came to a wall.

This wall, however, did not prevent him from going further; it was a wall forming the side of a cross alley, in which the street Jean Valjean was then in came to an end.

Here again he must decide; should he take the right or the left?

He looked to the right. The alley ran out to a space between some buildings that were mere sheds or barns, then terminated abruptly. The end of this blind alley was plain to be seen—a great white wall.

He looked to the left. The alley on this side was open and, about two hundred paces further on, ran into a street of which it was an affluent. In this direction lay safety.

The instant Jean Valjean decided to turn to the left, to try to reach the street which he saw at the end of the alley, he perceived, at the corner of the alley and the street towards which he was just about going, a sort of black, motionless statue.

It was a man, who had just been posted there, evidently, and who was waiting for him, guarding the passage.

Jean Valjean was startled.

What should he do?

There was now no time to turn back. What he had seen moving in the obscurity some distance behind him, the moment before, was undoubtedly Javert and his squad. Javert probably had already reached the commencement of the street of which Jean Valjean was at the end. Javert, to all appearance, was acquainted with this little trap, and had taken his precautions by sending one of his men to guard the exit. These conjectures, so like certainties, whirled about wildly in Jean Valjean's troubled brain, as a handful of dust flies before a sudden blast. He scrutinised the Cul-de-sac Genrot; there were high walls. He scrutinised the Petite Rue Picpus; there was a sentinel. He saw that dark form repeated in black upon the white pavement flooded with moonlight. To advance, was to fall upon that man. To go back, was to throw himself into Javert's hands. Jean Valjean felt as if caught by a chain that was slowly winding up. He looked up into the sky in despair.

WHICH WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE WERE THE STREETS LIGHTED WITH GAS

At this moment a muffled and regular sound began to make itself heard at some distance. Jean Valjean ventured to thrust his head a little way around the corner of the street. Seven or eight soldiers, formed in platoon, had just turned into the Rue Polonceau. He saw the gleam of their bayonets. They were coming towards him.

These soldiers, at whose head he distinguished the tall form of Javert, advanced slowly and with precaution. They stopped frequently. It was plain they were exploring all the recesses of the walls and all the entrances of doors and alleys.

It was—and here conjecture could not be deceived—some patrol which Javert had met and which he had put in requisition.

Javert's two assistants marched in the ranks.

At the rate at which they were marching, and with the stops they were making, it would take them about a quarter of an hour to arrive at the spot where Jean Valjean was. It was a frightful moment. A few minutes separated Jean Valjean from that awful precipice which was opening before him for the third time. And the galleys now were no longer simply the galleys, they were Cosette lost for ever; that is to say, a life in death.

There was now only one thing possible.

Jean Valjean had this peculiarity, that he might be said to carry two knapsacks; in one he had the thoughts of a saint, in the other the formidable talents of a convict. He helped himself from one or the other as occasion required.

Among other resources, thanks to his numerous escapes from the galleys at Toulon, he had, it will be remembered, become master of that incredible art of raising himself, in the right angle of a wall, if need be to the height of a sixth story; an art without ladders or props, by mere muscular strength, supporting himself by the back of his neck, his shoulders, his hips, and his knees, hardly making use of the few projections of the stone, which rendered so terrible and so celebrated the corner of the yard of the Conciergerie of Paris by which, some twenty years ago, the convict Battemolle made his escape.

Jean Valjean measured with his eyes the wall above which he saw the lime tree. It was about eighteen feet high. The angle that it made with the gable of the great building was filled in its lower part with a pile of masonry of triangular shape, probably intended to preserve this too convenient recess from a too public use. This preventive filling-up of the corners of a wall is very common in Paris.

This pile was about five feet high. From its top the space to climb to get upon the wall was hardly more than fourteen feet.

The wall was capped by a flat stone without any projection.

The difficulty was Cosette. Cosette did not know how to scale a wall. Abandon her? Jean Valjean did not think of it. To carry her was impossible. The whole strength of a man is necessary to accomplish these strange ascents. The least burden would make him lose his centre of gravity and he would fall.

He needed a cord. Jean Valjean had none. Where could he find a cord, at midnight, in the Rue Polonceau? Truly át that instant, if Jean Valjean had had a kingdom, he would have given it for a rope.

All extreme situations have their flashes which sometimes make us blind, sometimes illuminate us.

The despairing gaze of Jean Valjean encountered the lamp-post in the Cul-de-sac Genrot.

At this epoch there were no gas-lights in the streets of Paris. At nightfall they lighted the street lamps, which were placed at intervals, and were raised and lowered by means of a rope traversing the street from end to end, running through the grooves of posts. The reel on which this rope was wound was inclosed below the lantern in a little iron box, the key of which was kept by the lamp-lighter, and the rope itself was protected by a casing of metal.

Jean Valjean, with the energy of a final struggle, crossed the street at a bound, entered the cul-de-sac, sprang the bolt of the little box with the point of his knife, and an instant after was back at the side of Cosette. He had a rope. These desperate inventors of expedients, in their struggles with fatality, move electrically in case of need.

We have explained that the street lamps had not been lighted that night. The lamp in the Cul-de-sac Genrot was then, as a matter of course extinguished like the rest, and one might pass by without even noticing that it was not in its place.

Meanwhile the hour, the place, the darkness, the preoccupation of Jean Valjean, his singular actions, his going to and fro, all this began to disturb Cosette. Any other child would have uttered loud cries long before. She contented herself with pulling Jean Valjean by the skirt of his coat. The sound of the approaching patrol was constantly becoming more and more distinct.

"Father," said she, in a whisper, "I am afraid. Who is that is coming?"

"Hush!" answered the unhappy man, "it is the Thénardiess."

Cosette shuddered. He added:

"Don't say a word; I'll take care of her. If you cry, if you make any noise, the Thénardiess will hear you. She is coming to catch you."

Then, without any haste, but without doing anything a second time, with a firm and rapid decision, so much the more remarkable at such a moment when the patrol and Javert might come upon him at any instant, he took off his cravat, passed it around Cosette's body under the arms, taking care that it should not hurt the child, attached this cravat to an end of the rope by means of the knot which seamen call a swallow-knot, took the other end of the rope in his teeth, took off his shoes and stockings and threw them over the wall, climbed upon the pile of masonry and began to raise himself in the angle of the wall and the gable with as much solidity and certainty as if he had the rounds of a ladder under his heels and his elbows. Half a minute had not passed before he was on his knees on the wall.

Cosette watched him, stupefied, without saying a word. Jean Valjean's charge and the name of the Thénardiess had made her dumb.

All at once, she heard Jean Valjean's voice calling to her in a low whisper:

"Put your back against the wall."

She obeyed.

"Don't speak, and don't be afraid," added Jean Valjean.

And she felt herself lifted from the ground.

Before she had time to think where she was she was at the top of the wall.

Jean Valjean seized her, put her on his back, took her two little hands in his left hand, lay down flat and crawled along the top of the wall as far as the cut-off corner. As he had supposed, there was a building there, the roof of which sloped from the top of the wooden casing very nearly to the ground, with a gentle inclination, and just reaching to the lime-tree.

A fortunate circumstance, for the wall was much higher on this side than on the street. Jean Valjean saw the ground beneath him at a great depth.

He had just reached the inclined plane of the roof, and had not yet left the crest of the wall, when a violent uproar proclaimed the arrival of the patrol. He heard the thundering voice of Javert:

"Search the cul-de-sac! The Rue Droit Mur is guarded, the Petite Rue Picpus also. I'll answer for it he is in the cul-de-sac."

The soldiers rushed into the Cul-de-sac Genrot.

Jean Valjean slid down the roof, keeping hold of Cosette, reached the lime-tree, and jumped to the ground. Whether from terror, or from courage, Cosette had not uttered a whisper. Her hands were a little scraped.

COMMENCEMENT OF AN ENIGMA

JEAN VALJEAN found himself in a sort of garden, very large and of a singular appearance; one of those gloomy gardens which seem made to be seen in the winter and at night. This garden was oblong, with a row of large poplars at the further end, some tall forest trees in the corners, and a clear space in the centre, where stood a very large isolated tree, then a few fruit trees, contorted and shaggy, like big bushes, some vegetable beds, a melon patch the glass covers of which shone in the moonlight, and an old well. There were here and there benches which seemed black with moss. The walks were bordered with sorry little shrubs perfectly straight. The grass covered half of them, and a green moss covered the rest.

Jean Valjean had on one side the building, down the roof of which he had come, a wood-pile, and behind the wood, against the wall, a stone statue, the mutilated face of which was now nothing but a shapeless mask which was seen dimly through the obscurity.

The building was in ruins, but some dismantled rooms could be distinguished in it, one of which was well filled, and appeared to serve as a shed.

The large building of the Rue Droit Mur which ran back on the Petite Rue Picpus, presented upon this garden two square façades. These inside façades were still more gloomy than those on the outside. All the windows were grated. No light was to be seen. On the upper stories there were shutters as in prisons. The shadow of one of these façades was projected upon the other, and fell on the garden like an immense black pall.

No other house could be seen. The further end of the garden was lost in mist and in darkness. Still, he could make out walls intersecting, as if there were other cultivated grounds beyond, as well as the low roofs of the Rue Polonceau.

Nothing can be imagined more wild and more solitary than this garden. There was no one there, which was very natural on account of the hour; but it did not seem as if the place were made for anybody to walk in, even in broad noon.

Jean Valjean's first care had been to find his shoes, and put them on; then he entered the shed with Cosette. A man trying to escape never thinks himself sufficiently concealed. The child, thinking constantly of the Thénardiess, shared his instinct, and cowered down as closely as she could.

Cosette trembled, and pressed closely to his side. They heard the tumultuous clamour of the patrol ransacking the cul-de-sac and the street, the clatter of their muskets against the stones, the calls of Javert to the watchmen he had stationed, and his imprecations mingled with words which they could not distinguish.

At the end of a quarter of an hour it seemed as though this stormy rumbling began to recede. Jean Valjean did not breathe.

He had placed his hand gently upon Cosette's mouth.

But the solitude about him was so strangely calm that that frightful din, so furious and so near, did not even cast over it a shadow of disturbance. It seemed as if these walls were built of the deaf stones spoken of in Scripture.

Suddenly, in the midst of this deep calm, a new sound arose; a celestial, divine, ineffable sound, as ravishing as the other was horrible. It was a hymn which came forth from the darkness, a bewildering mingling of prayer and harmony in the obscure and fearful silence of the night; voices of women, but voices with the pure accents of virgins, and artless accents of children; those voices which are not of earth, and which resemble those that the new-born still hear, and the dying hear already. This song came from the gloomy building which overlooked the garden. At the moment when the uproar of the demons receded, one would have said, it was a choir of angels approaching in the darkness.

Cosette and Jean Valjean fell on their knees.

They knew not what it was; they knew not where they were; but they both felt, the man and the child, the penitent and the innocent, that they ought to be on their knees.

These voices had this strange effect; they did not prevent the building from appearing deserted. It was like a supernatural song in an uninhabited dwelling.

While these voices were singing Jean Valjean was entirely absorbed in them. He no longer saw the night, he saw a blue sky. He seemed to feel the spreading of these wings which we all have within us.

The chant ceased. Perhaps it had lasted a long time. Jean Valjean could not have told. Hours of ecstasy are never more than a moment.

All had again relapsed into silence. There was nothing more in the street, nothing more in the garden. That which threatened, that which reassured, all had vanished. The wind rattled the dry grass on the top of the wall, which made a low, soft, and mournful noise.

THE ENIGMA REDOUBLES

The child had laid her head upon a stone and gone to sleep.

He sat down near her and looked at her. Little by little, as he beheld her, he grew calm, and regained possession of his clearness of mind.

He plainly perceived this truth, the basis of his life henceforth, that so long as she should be alive, so long as he should have her with him, he should need nothing except for her, and fear nothing save on her account. He did not even realise that he was very cold, having taken off his coat to cover her.

Meanwhile, through the reverie into which he had fallen, he had heard for some time a singular noise. It sounded like a little bell that some one was shaking. This noise was in the garden. It was heard distinctly, though feebly. It resembled the dimly heard tinkling of cow-bells in the pastures at night.

This noise made Jean Valjean turn.

He looked, and saw that there was some one in the garden.

Something which resembled a man was walking among the glass cases of the melon patch, rising up, stooping down, stopping, with a regular motion, as if he were drawing or stretching something upon the ground. This being appeared to limp.

Jean Valjean shuddered with the continual tremor of the outcast. To them everything is hostile and suspicious. They distrust the day because it helps to discover them, and the night because it helps to surprise them. Just now he was shuddering because the garden was empty, now he shuddered because there was some one in it.

He fell again from chimerical terrors into real terrors. He said to himself that perhaps Javert and his spies had not gone away, that they had doubtless left somebody on the watch in the street; that, if this man should discover him in the garden, he would cry thief, and would deliver him up. He took the sleeping Cosette gently in his arms and carried her into the furthest corner of the shed behind a heap of old furniture that was out of use. Cosette did not stir.

From there he watched the strange motions of the man in the melon patch. It seemed very singular, but the sound of the bell followed every movement of the man. When the man approached, the sound approached; when he moved away, the sound moved away; if he made some sudden motion, a trill accompanied the motion; when he stopped, the noise ceased. It seemed evident that the bell was fastened to this man; but then what could that mean? what was this man to whom a bell was hung as to a ram or a cow?

While he was revolving these questions, he touched Cosette's hands. They were icy.

"Oh! God!" said he.

He called to her in a low voice:

"Cosette!"

She did not open her eyes.

He shook her smartly.

She did not wake.

"Could she be dead?" said he, and he sprang up, shuddering from head to foot.

The most frightful thoughts rushed through his mind in confusion. There are moments when hideous suppositions besiege us like a throng of furies and violently force the portals of our brain. When those we love are in danger, our solicitude invents all sorts of follies. He remembered that sleep may be fatal in the open air in a cold night.

Cosette was pallid; she had fallen prostrate on the ground at his feet, making no sign.

He listened for her breathing; she was breathing; but with a respiration that appeared feeble and about to stop.

How should he get her warm again? how rouse her? All else was banished from his thoughts. He rushed desperately out of the ruin.

It was absolutely necessary that in less than a quarter of an hour Cosette should be in bed and before a fire.

THE MAN WITH THE BELL

He walked straight to the man whom he saw in the garden. He had taken in his hand the roll of money which was in his vest-pocket.

This man had his head down, and did not see him coming. A few strides, Jean Valjean was at his side.

Jean Valjean approached him, exclaiming:

"A hundred francs!"

The man started and raised his eyes.

"A hundred francs for you," continued Jean Valjean, "if you will give me refuge to-night."

The moon shone full in Jean Valjean's bewildered face.

"What, it is you, Father Madeleine!" said the man.

This name, thus pronounced, at this dark hour, in this unknown place, by this unknown man, made Jean Valjean start back.

He was ready for anything but that. The speaker was an old man, bent and lame, dressed much like a peasant, who had on his left knee a leather knee-cap from which hung a bell. His face was in the shade, and could not be distinguished.

Meanwhile the goodman had taken off his cap, and was exclaiming, tremulously:

"Ah! my God! how did you come here, Father Madeleine? How did you get in, O Lord? Did you fall from the sky? There is no doubt, if you ever do fall, you will fall from there. And what has happened to you? You have no cravat, you have no hat, you have no coat? Do you know that you would have frightened anybody who did not know you? No coat? Merciful heavens! are the saints all crazy now? But how did you get in?"

One word did not wait for another. The old man spoke with a rustic volubility in which there was nothing disquieting. All this was said with a mixture of astonishment, and frank good nature.

"Who are you? and what is this house!" asked Jean Valjean.

"Oh! indeed, that is good now," exclaimed the old man, "I am the one you got the place for here, and this house is the one you got me the place in. What! you don't remember me?"

"No," said Jean Valjean. "And how does it happen that you know me?"

"You saved my life?" said the man.

He turned, a ray of the moon lighted up his side face, and Jean Valjean recognised old Fauchelevent.

"Ah!" said Jean Valjean, "it is you? yes, I remember you."

"That is very fortunate!" said the old man, in a reproachful tone.

"And what are you doing here?" added Jean Valjean.

"Oh! I am covering my melons."

Old Fauchelevent had in his hand, indeed, at the moment when Jean Valjean accosted him, the end of a piece of awning which he was stretching out over the melon patch. He had already spread out several in this way during the hour he had been in the garden. It was this work which made him go through the peculiar motions observed by Jean Valjean from the shed.

He continued:

"I said to myself: the moon is bright, there is going to be a frost. Suppose I put their jackets on my melons? And," added he, looking at Jean Valjean, with a loud laugh, "you would have done well to do as much for yourself? but how did you come here?"

Jean Valjean, finding that he was known by this man, at least under his name of Madeleine, went no further with his precautions. He multiplied questions. Oddly enough their parts seemed reversed. It was he, the intruder, who put questions.

"And what is this bell you have on your knee?"

"That!" answered Fauchelevent, "that is so that they may keep away from me."

"How! keep away from you?"

Old Fauchelevent winked in an indescribable manner.

"Ah! Bless me! there's nothing but women in this house; plenty of young girls. It seems that I am dangerous to meet. The bell warns them. When I come they go away."

"What is this house?"

"Why, you know very well."

"No, I don't."

"Why, you got me this place here as gardener."

"Answer me as if I didn't know."

"Well, it is the Convent of the Petit Picpus, then."

Jean Valjean remembered. Chance, that is to say, Providence, had thrown him precisely into this convent of the Quartier Saint Antoine, to which old Fauchelevent, crippled by his fall from his cart, had been admitted, upon his recommendation, two years before. He repeated as if he were talking to himself:

"The Convent of the Petit Picpus!"

"But now, really," resumed Fauchelevent, "how the deuce did you manage to get in, you, Father Madeleine? It is no use for you to be a saint, you are a man; and no men come in here."

"But you are here."

"There is none but me."

"But," resumed Jean Valjean, "I must stay here."

"Oh! my God," exclaimed Fauchelevent.

Jean Valjean approached the old man, and said to him in a grave voice:

"Father Fauchelevent, I saved your life."

"I was first to remember it," answered Fauchelevent.

"Well, you can now do for me what I once did for you."

Fauchelevent grasped in his old wrinkled and trembling hands the robust hands of Jean Valjean, and it was some seconds before he could speak; at last he exclaimed:

"Oh! that would be a blessing of God if I could do something for you, in return for that! I save your life! Monsieur Mayor, the old man is at your disposal."

A wonderful joy had, as it were, transfigured the old gardener. A radiance seemed to shine forth from his face.

"What do you want me to do?" he added.

"I will explain. You have a room?"

"I have a solitary shanty, over there, behind the ruins of the old convent, in a corner that nobody ever sees. There are three rooms."

The shanty was in fact so well concealed behind the ruins, and so well arranged, that no one should see it—that Jean Valjean had not seen it.

"Good," said Jean Valjean. "Now I ask of you two things."

"What are they, Monsieur Madeleine?"

"First, that you will not tell anybody what you know about me. Second, that you will not attempt to learn anything more."

"As you please. I know that you can do nothing dishonourable, and that you have always been a man of God. And then, besides, it was you that put me here. It is your place, I am yours."

"Very well. But now come with me. We will go for the child."

"Ah!" said Fauchelevent, "there is a child!"

He said not a word more, but followed Jean Valjean as a dog follows his master.

In half an hour Cosette, again become rosy before a good fire, was asleep in the old gardener's bed. Jean Valjean had put on his cravat and coat; his hat, which he had thrown over the wall, had been found and brought in. While Jean Valjean was putting on his coat, Fauchelevent had taken off his knee-cap with the bell attached, which now, hanging on a nail near a shutter, decorated the wall. The two men were warming themselves, with their elbows on a table, on which Fauchelevent had set a piece of cheese, some brown bread, a bottle of wine, and two glasses, and the old man said to Jean Valjean, putting his hand on his knee:

"Ah! Father Madeleine! you didn't know me at first? You save people's lives and then you forget them? Oh! that's bad; they remember you. You are ungrateful!"

BOOK VI—CEMETERIES TAKE WHAT IS GIVEN THEM

WHICH TREATS OF THE MANNER OF ENTERING THE CONVENT

Into this house it was that Jean Valjean had, as Fauchelevent said, "fallen from heaven."

When Cosette had been put to bed, Jean Valjean and Fauchelevent had taken a glass of wine and a piece of cheese before a blazing fire; then, the only bed in the shanty being occupied by Cosette, they had thrown themselves each upon a bundle of straw. Before closing his eyes, Jean Valjean had said: "Henceforth, I must remain here." These words were chasing one another through Fauchelevent's head the whole night.

To tell the truth, neither of them had slept.

Jean Valjean, feeling that he was discovered and Javert was upon his track, knew full well that he and Cosette were lost should they return into the city. Since the new blast which had burst upon him, had thrown him into this cloister, Jean Valjean had but one thought, to remain there. Now, for one in his unfortunate position, this convent was at once the safest and the most dangerous place; the most dangerous, for, no man being allowed to enter it, if he should be discovered, it was a flagrant crime, and Jean Valjean would take but one step from the convent to prison; the safest, for if he succeeded in getting permission to remain, who would come there to look for him? To live in an impossible place; that would be safety.

At daybreak, having dreamed enormously, old Fauchelevent opened his eyes, and saw Monsieur Madeleine, who, seated upon his bunch of straw, was looking at Cosette as she slept. Fauchelevent half arose, and said:—

"Now that you are here, how are you going to manage to come in?"

This question summed up the situation, and wakened Jean Valjean from his reverie.

The two men took counsel.

"To begin with," said Fauchelevent, "you will not set foot outside of this room, neither the little girl nor you. One step in the garden, we are ruined."

"That is true."

"Monsieur Madeleine," resumed Fauchelevent, "you have arrived at a very good time; I mean to say very bad; there is one of these ladies dangerously sick. On that account they do not look this way much. She must be dying. They are saying the forty-hour prayers. The whole community is in derangement. That takes up their attention. She who is about departing is a saint. In fact, we are all saints here; all the difference between them and me is, that they say: our cell, and I say: my shanty. They are going to have the orison for the dying, and then the orison for the dead. For to-day we shall be quiet here; and I do not answer for to-morrow."

"However," observed Jean Valjean, "this shanty is under the corner of the wall; it is hidden by a sort of ruin; there are trees; they cannot see it from the convent."

"And I add, that the nuns never come near it."

"Well?" said Jean Valjean.

The interrogation point which followed that well, meant: it seems to me that we can remain concealed. This interrogation point Fauchelevent answered:—

"There are the little girls."

"What little girls?" asked Jean Valjean.

As Fauchelevent opened his mouth to explain the words he had just uttered, a single stroke of a bell was heard.

"The nun is dead," said he. "There is the knell."

And he motioned to Jean Valjean to listen.

The bell sounded a second time.

"It is the knell, Monsieur Madeleine. The bell will strike every minute, for twenty-four hours, until the body goes out of the church.

You see they play. In their recreations, if a ball roll here, that is enough for them to come after it, in spite of the rules, and rummage all about here. Those cherubs are little devils."

"Who?" asked Jean Valjean.

"The little girls. You would be found out very soon. They would cry, 'What! a man!' But there is no danger to-day. There will be no recreation. The day will be all prayers. You hear the bell. As I told you, a stroke every minute. It is the knell."

"I understand, Father Fauchelevent. There are boarding scholars."

And Jean Valjean thought within himself:—

"Here, then, Cosette can be educated, too."

Fauchelevent exclaimed:—

"Zounds! they are the little girls for you! And how they would scream at sight of you! and how they would run! Here, to be a man, is to have the plague. You see how they fasten a bell to my leg, as they would to a wild beast."

Jean Valjean was studying more and more deeply. "The convent would save us," murmured he. Then he raised his voice:

"Yes, the difficulty is in remaining."

"No," said Fauchelevent, "it is to get out."

Jean Valjean felt his blood run cold.

"To get out?"

"Yes, Monsieur Madeleine, in order to come in, it is necessary that you should get out."

And, after waiting for a sound from the tolling bell to die away, Fauchelevent pursued:—

"It would not do to have you found here like this. Whence do you come? for me you have fallen from heaven, because I know you; but for the nuns, you must come in at the door.

Suddenly they heard a complicated ringing upon another bell.

"Oh!" said Fauchelevent, "that is the ring for the mothers. They are going to the chapter. They always hold a chapter when anybody dies. She died at daybreak. It is usually at daybreak that people die. But cannot you go out the way you came in? Let us see; this is not to question you, but where did you come in?"

Jean Valjean became pale; the bare idea of climbing down again into that formidable street, made him shudder. Make your way out of a forest full of tigers, and when out, fancy yourself advised by a friend to return. Jean Valjean imagined all the police still swarming in the quarter, officers on the watch, sentries everywhere, frightful fists stretched out towards his collar, Javert, perhaps, at the corner of the square.

"Impossible," said he. "Father Fauchelevent, let it go that I fell from on high."

"Ah! I believe it, I believe it," replied Fauchelevent. "You have no need to tell me so. God must have taken you into his hand, to have a close look at you, and then put you down. Only he meant to put you into a monastery; he made a mistake. Hark! another ring; that is to warn the porter to go and notify the municipality, so that they may go and notify the death-physician, so that he may come and see that there is really a dead woman. All that is the ceremony of dying. These good ladies do not like this visit very much. A physician believes in nothing. He lifts the veil. He even lifts something else, sometimes. How soon they have notified the inspector, this time! What can be the matter? Your little one is asleep yet. What is her name?"

"Cosette."

"She is your girl? that is to say: you should be her grandfather?"

"Yes."

"For her, to get out will be easy. I have my door, which opens into the court. I knock; the porter opens. I have my basket on my back; the little girl is inside; I go out. Father Fauchelevent goes out with his basket—that is all simple. You will tell the little girl to keep very still. She will be under cover. I will leave her as soon as I can, with a good old friend of mine, a fruiteress, in the Rue du Chemin Vert, who is deaf, and who has a little bed. I will scream into the fruiteress's ear that she is my niece, and she must keep her for me till to-morrow. Then the little girl will come back with you; for I shall bring you back. It must be done. But how are you going to manage to get out?"

Jean Valjean shook his head.

"Let nobody see me, that is all, Father Fauchelevent. Find some means to get me out, like Cosette, in a basket, and under cover."

Fauchelevent scratched the tip of his ear with the middle finger of his left hand—a sign of serious embarrassment.

A third ring made a diversion.

"That is the death-physician going away," said Fauchelevent. "He has looked, and said she is dead; it is right. When the inspector has visėd the passport for paradise, the undertaker sends a coffin. If it is a mother, the mothers lay her out; if it is a sister, the sisters lay her out. After which, I nail it up. That's a part of my gardening. A gardener is something of a gravedigger. They put her in a low room in the church which communicates with the street, and where no man can enter except the death-physician. I do not count the bearers and myself for men. In that room I nail the coffin. The bearers come and take her, and whip-up, driver: that is the way they go to heaven. They bring in a box with nothing in it, they carry it away with something inside. That is what an interment is. *De profundis.*"

A ray of the rising sun beamed upon the face of the sleeping Cosette, who half-opened her mouth dreamily, seeming like an angel drinking in the light. Jean Valjean was looking at her. He no longer heard Fauchelevent.

Not being heard is no reason for silence. The brave old gardener quietly continued his garrulous rehearsal.

"The grave is at the Vaugirard cemetery. They pretend that this Vaugirard cemetery is going to be suppressed. It is an ancient cemetery, which is not according to the regulations, which does not wear the uniform, and which is going to be retired. I am sorry for it, for it is convenient. I have a friend there—Father Mestienne, the gravedigger. The nuns here have the privilege of being carried to that cemetery at night-fall. There is an order of the Préfecture, expressly for them. But what events since yesterday? Mother Crucifixion is dead, and Father Madeleine"——

"Is buried," said Jean Valjean, sadly smiling.

Fauchelevent echoed the word.

"Really, if you were here for good, it would be a genuine burial."

A fourth time the bell rang out. Fauchelevent quickly took down the knee-piece and bell from the nail, and buckled it on his knee.

"This time, it is for me. The mother prioress wants me. Well! I am pricking myself with the tongue of my buckle. Monsieur Madeleine, do not stir, but wait for me. There is something new. If you are hungry, there is the wine, and bread and cheese."

And he went out of the hut, saying. "I am coming, I am coming."

Jean Valjean saw him hasten across the garden, as fast as his crooked leg would let him, with side glances at his melons the while.

In less than ten minutes, Father Fauchelevent, whose bell put the nuns to flight as he went along, rapped softly at a door, and a gentle voice answered—*Forever, Forever!* that is to say, *Come in.*

This door was that of the parlour allotted to the gardener, for use when it was necessary to communicate with him. This parlour was near the hall of the chapter. The prioress, seated in the only chair in the parlour, was waiting for Fauchelevent.

FAUCHELEVENT FACING THE DIFFICULTY

A SERIOUS and troubled bearing is peculiar, on critical occasions, to certain characters and certain professions, especially priests and monastics. At the moment when Fauchelevent entered, this double sign of preoccupation marked the countenance of the prioress, the charming and learned Mademoiselle de Blemeur, Mother Innocent, who was ordinarily cheerful.

The gardener made a timid bow, and stopped at the threshold of the cell. The prioress, who was saying her rosary, raised her eyes and said:

"Ah! it is you, Father Fauvent."

This abbreviation had been adopted in the convent.

Fauchelevent again began his bow.

"Father Fauvent, I have called you."

"I am here, reverend mother."

"I wish to speak to you."

"And I, for my part," said Fauchelevent, with a boldness at which he was alarmed himself, "I have something to say to the most reverend mother."

The prioress looked at him.

"Ah, you have a communication to make to me."

"A petition!"

"Well, what is it?"

The goodman, with the assurance of one who feels that he is appreciated, began before the reverend prioress a rustic harangue, quite diffuse and very profound. He spoke at length of his age, his infirmities, of the weight of years henceforth doubly heavy upon him, of the growing demands of his work, of the size of the garden, of the nights to be spent, like last night for example, when he had to put awnings over the melons on account of the moon; and he finally ended with this: "that he had a brother—(the prioress gave a start)—a brother not young—(second start of the prioress, but a reassured start)—that if it was desired, this brother could come and live with him and help him; that he was an excellent gardener; that the community would get good services from him, better than his own; that, otherwise, if his brother were not admitted, as he, the oldest, felt that he was broken down, and unequal to the labour, he would be obliged to leave, though with much regret; and that his brother had a little girl that he would bring with him, who would be reared under God in the house, and who, perhaps, —who knows?—would some day become a nun.

When he had finished, the prioress stopped the sliding of her rosary through her fingers, and said:

"Can you, between now and night, procure a strong iron bar?"

"For what work?"

"To be used as a lever?"

"Yes, reverend mother," answered Fauchelevent.

The prioress, without adding a word, arose, and went into the next room, which was the hall of the chapter, where the vocal mothers were probably assembled: Fauchelevent remained alone.

MOTHER INNOCENT

About a quarter of an hour elapsed. The prioress returned and resumed her seat.

Both seemed preoccupied. We report as well as we can the dialogue that followed.

"Father Fauvent?"

"Reverend mother?"

"You are familiar with the chapel?"

'I have a little box there to go to mass, and the offices."

"And you have been in the choir about your work?"

"Two or three times."

"A stone is to be raised."

"Heavy?"

"The slab of the pavement at the side of the altar."

"The stone that covers the vault"

"Yes."

"That is a piece of work where it would be well to have two men."

"Mother Ascension, who is as strong as a man, will help you."

"A woman is never a man."

"We have only a woman to help you. Everybody does what he can. Because Dom Mabillon gives four hundred and seventeen epistles of St. Bernard, and Merlonus Horstius gives only three hundred and sixty-seven, I do not despise Merlonus Horstius."

"Nor I either."

"Merit consists in work according to our strength. A cloister is not a ship-yard."

"And a woman is not a man. My brother is very strong."

"And then you will have a lever."

"That is the only kind of key that fits that kind of door."

"There is a ring in the stone."

"I will pass the lever through it."

"And the stone is arranged to turn on a pivot."

"Very well, reverend mother, I will open the vault."

"And the four mother choristers will assist you."

"And when the vault is opened?"

"It must be shut again."

"Is that all?"

"No."

"Give me your orders, most reverend mother."

"Fauvent, we have confidence in you."

"I am here to do everything."

"And to keep silent about everything."

"Yes, reverend mother."

"When the vault is opened——."

"I will shut it again."

"But before——."

"What, reverend mother?"

"Something must be let down."

There was silence. The prioress, after a quivering of the under-lip which resembled hesitation, spoke:

"Father Fauvent, Mother Crucifixion will be buried in the coffin in which she has slept for twenty years."

"That is right."

"It is a continuation of sleep."

"I shall have to nail her up then in that coffin."

"Yes."

"And we will put aside the undertaker's coffin?"

"Precisely."

"I am at the disposal of the most reverend community."

"The four mother choristers will help you."

"To nail up the coffin? I don't need them."

"No. To let it down."

"Where?"

"Into the vault."

"What vault?"

"Under the altar."

Fauchelevent gave a start.

"The vault under the altar!"

"Under the altar."

"But——"

"You will have an iron bar."

"Yes, but——"

"You will lift the stone with the bar by means of the ring."

"But——"

"We must obey the dead. To be buried in the vault under the altar of the chapel, not to go into profane ground, to remain in death where she prayed in life; this was the last request of Mother Crucifixion. She has asked it, that is to say, commanded it."

"But it is forbidden."

"Forbidden by men, enjoined by God."

"If it should come to be known?"

"We have confidence in you."

"Oh! as for me, I am like a stone in your wall."

"The chapter has assembled. The vocal mothers, whom I have just consulted again and who are now deliberating, have decided that Mother

Crucifixion should be, according to her desire, buried in her coffin under our altar. Think, Father Fauvent, if there should be miracles performed here! what glory under God for the community! Miracles spring from tombs."

"But, reverend Mother, if the agent of the Health Commission——"

The prioress drew breath, then turning towards Fauchelevent:

"Father Fauvent, is it settled?"

"It is settled, reverend mother."

"Can we count upon you?"

"I shall obey."

"It is well."

"I am entirely devoted to the convent."

"It is understood, you will close the coffin. The sisters will carry it into the chapel. The office for the dead will be said. Then they will return to the cloister. Between eleven o'clock and midnight, you will come with your iron bar. All will be done with the greatest secrecy. There will be in the chapel only the four mother choristers, Mother Ascension, and you."

"Reverend mother?"

"What?"

"If you should ever have any other work like this, my brother is very strong. A Turk."

"You will do it as quickly as possible."

"I cannot go very fast. I am infirm; it is on that account I need help. I limp."

"Father Fauvent, now I think of it, we will take a whole hour. It is not too much. Be at the high altar with the iron bar at eleven o'clock. The office commences at midnight. It must all be finished a good quarter of an hour before."

"I will do everything to prove my zeal for the community. This is the arrangement. I shall nail up the coffin. At eleven o'clock precisely I will be in the chapel. The mother choristers will be there. Mother Ascension will be there. Two men would be better. But no matter! I shall have my lever. We shall open the vault, let down the coffin, and close the vault again. After which, there will be no trace of anything. The government will suspect nothing. Reverend mother, is this all so?"

"No."

"What more is there, then?"

"There is still the empty coffin."

This brought them to a stand. Fauchelevent pondered. The prioress pondered.

"Father Fauvent, what shall be done with the coffin?"

"It will be put in the ground."

"Empty?"

Another silence. Fauchelevent made with his left hand that peculiar gesture, which dismisses an unpleasant question.

"Reverend mother, I nail up the coffin in the lower room in the church, and nobody can come in there except me, and I will cover the coffin with the pall."

"Yes, but the bearers, in putting it into the hearse and in letting it down into the grave, will surely perceive that there is nothing inside."

"Ah! the de——!" exclaimed Fauchelevent.

The prioress began to cross herself, and looked fixedly at the gardener. *Vil* stuck in his throat.

He made haste to think of an expedient to make her forget the oath.

"Reverend mother, I will put some earth into the coffin. That will have the effect of a body."

"You are right. Earth is the same thing as man. So you will prepare the empty coffin?"

"I will attend to that."

The face of the prioress, till then dark and anxious, became again serene. She made him the sign of a superior dismissing an inferior. Fauchelevent moved towards the door. As he was going out, the prioress gently raised her voice."

"Father Fauvent, I am satisfied with you; to-morrow after the burial, bring your brother to me, and tell him to bring his daughter."

IN WHICH JEAN VALJEAN HAS QUITE THE APPEARANCE OF HAVING READ AUSTIN CASTILLEJO

The strides of the lame are like the glances of the one eyed; they do not speedily reach their aim. Furthermore, Fauchelevent was perplexed. It took him nearly a quarter of an hour to get back to the

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FATHER FAUVENT, I AM SATISFIED WITH YOU; TO-MORROW AFTER THE BURIAL, BRING YOUR BROTHER TO ME

shanty in the garden. Cosette was awake. Jean Valjean had seated her near the fire. At the moment when Fauchelevent entered, Jean Valjean was showing her the gardener's basket hanging on the wall and saying to her:

"Listen attentively to me, my little Cosette. We must go away from this house, but we shall come back, and we shall be very well off here. The good man here will carry you out on his back inside there. You will wait for me at a lady's. I shall come and find you. Above all, if you do not want the Thénardiess to take you back, obey and say nothing."

Cosette nodded her head with a serious look.

At the sound of Fauchelevent opening the door, Jean Valjean turned.

"Well?"

"All is arranged, and nothing is," said Fauchelevent. "I have permission to bring you in; but before bringing you in, it is necessary to get you out. That is where the cart is blocked! For the little girl, it is easy enough."

"You will carry her out?"

"And she will keep quiet?"

"I will answer for it."

"But you, Father Madeleine?"

And, after an anxious silence, Fauchelevent exclaimed:

"But why not go out the way you came in?"

Jean Valjean, as before, merely answered: "Impossible."

Fauchelevent, talking more to himself than to Jean Valjean, grumbled:

"There is another thing that torments me. I said I would put in some earth. But I think that earth inside, instead of a body, will not be like it; that will not do, it will shake about; it will move. The men will feel it. You understand, Father Madeleine, the government will find it out."

Jean Valjean stared at him, and thought that he was raving.

Fauchelevent resumed:

"How the d——ickens are you going to get out? For all this must be done to-morrow. To-morrow I am to bring you in. The prioress expects you."

Then he explained to Jean Valjean that this was a reward for a service that he, Fauchelevent, was rendering to the community. That it was a part of his duties to assist in burials, that he nailed up the coffins, and attended the gravedigger at the cemetery. That the nun who died that morning had requested to be buried in the coffin which she had used as a bed, and interred in the vault under the altar of the chapel. That this was forbidden by the regulations of the police, but that she was one of those departed ones to whom nothing is refused. That the prioress and the vocal mothers intended to carry out the will of the deceased. So much the worse for the government. That he, Fauchelevent, would nail up the coffin in the cell, raise the stone in the chapel, and let down the body into the vault. And that, in return for this, the prioress would admit his brother into the house as gardener and his niece as boarder. That his brother was M. Madeleine, and that his niece was Cosette. That the prioress had told him to bring his brother the next evening, after the fictitious burial at the cemetery. But that he could not bring M. Madeleine from the outside, if M. Madeleine were not outside. That that was the first difficulty. And then that he had another difficulty; the empty coffin."

"What is the empty coffin?" asked Jean Valjean.

Fauchelevent responded:

"The coffin from the administration."

"What coffin? and what administration?"

"A nun dies. The municipality physician comes and says: there is a nun dead. The government sends a coffin. The next day it sends a hearse and some bearers to take the coffin and carry it to the cemetery. The bearers will come and take up the coffin; there will be nothing in it."

"Put somebody in it."

"A dead body? I have none."

"No."

"What then?"

"A living body."

"What living body?"

"Me," said Jean Valjean.

Fauchelevent, who had taken a seat, sprang up as if a cracker had burst under his chair.

"You!"

"Why not?"

Jean Valjean had one of those rare smiles which came over him like the aurora in a winter sky.

"You know, Fauchelevent, that you said: Mother Crucifixion is dead, and that I added: and Father Madeleine is buried. It will be so."

"Ah! good, you are laughing, you are not talking seriously."

"Very seriously. I must get out!"

"Undoubtedly."

"And I told you to find a basket and a cover for me also."

"Well!"

'The basket will be of pine, and the cover will be a black cloth."

"In the first place, a white cloth. The nuns are buried in white."

"Well, a white cloth."

"You are not like other men, Father Madeleine."

To see such devices, which are nothing more than the savage and foolhardy inventions of the galleys, appear in the midst of the peaceful things that surrounded him and mingled with what he called the "little jog-jog of the convent," was to Fauchelevent an astonishment comparable to that of a person who should see a seamew fishing in the brook in the Rue St. Denis.

Jean Valjean continued:

"The question is, how to get out without being seen. This is the means. But in the first place tell me, how is it done? where is this coffin?"

"The empty one?"

"Yes."

"Down in what is called the dead-room. It is on two trestles and under the pall."

"What is the length of the coffin?"

"Six feet."

"What is the dead-room?"

"It is a room on the ground floor, with a grated window towards the garden, closed on the outside with a shutter, and two doors; one leading to the convent, the other to the church."

"What church?"

"The church on the street, the church for everybody?"

"Have you the keys of those two doors?"

"No. I have the key of the door that opens into the convent; the porter has the key to the door that opens into the church."

"When does the porter open that door?"

"Only to let in the bearers, who come after the coffin; as soon as the coffin goes out, the door is closed again."

"Who nails up the coffin?"

"I do."

"Who puts the cloth on it?"

"I do."

"Are you alone."

"No other man, except the police physician, can enter the dead-room. That is even written upon the wall."

"Could you, to-night, when all are asleep in the convent, hide me in that room?"

"No. But I can hide you in a little dark closet which opens into the dead-room, where I keep my burial tools, and of which I have the care and the key."

"At what hour will the hearse come after the coffin to-morrow?"

"About three o'clock in the afternoon. The burial takes place at the Vaugirard cemetery, a little before night. It is not very near."

"I shall remain hidden in your tool-closet all night and all the morning. And about eating? I shall be hungry."

"I will bring you something."

"You can come and nail me up in the coffin at two o'clock."

Fauchelevent started back, and began to snap his fingers.

"But it is impossible!"

"Pshaw! to take a hammer and drive some nails into a board?"

What seemed unheard-of to Fauchelevent was, we repeat simple to Jean Valjean. Jean Valjean had been in worse straits. He who has been a prisoner knows the art of making himself small according to the dimensions of the place for escape. The prisoner is subject to flight as the sick man is to the crisis which cures or kills him. An escape is a cure. What does not one undergo to be cured? To be nailed up and carried out in a chest like a bundle, to live a long time in a box, to find air where there is none, to economise the breath for entire hours, to know how to be stifled without dying—that was one of the gloomy talents of Jean Valjean.

Moreover, a coffin in which there is a living being, that convict's expedient, is also an emperor's expedient. If we can believe the monk Austin Castillejo, this was the means which Charles V., desiring after his abdication to see La Plombes again a last time, employed to bring her into the monastery of St. Juste and to take her out again.

Fauchelevent, recovering a little, exclaimed:

"But how will you manage to breathe?"

"I shall breathe."

"In that box? Only to think of it suffocates me."

"You surely have a gimlet, you can make a few little holes about the mouth here and there, and you can nail it without drawing the upper board tight."

"Good! But if you happen to cough or sneeze?"

"He who is escaping never coughs and never sneezes."

And Jean Valjean added:

"Father Fauchelevent, I must decide: either to be taken here, or to be willing to go out in the hearse."

Everybody has noticed the taste which cats have for stopping and loitering in a half-open door. Who has not said to a cat: Why don't you come in? There are men who, with an opportunity half-open before them, have a similar tendency to remain undecided between two resolutions, at the risk of being crushed by destiny abruptly closing the opportunity. The over prudent, cats as they are, and because they are cats, sometimes run more danger than the bold. Fauchelevent was of this hesitating nature. However, Jean Valjean's coolness won him over in spite of himself. He grumbled:

"It is true, there is no other way."

Jean Valjean resumed:

"The only thing that I am anxious about, is what will be done at the cemetery."

"That is just what does not embarrass me," exclaimed Fauchelevent. "If you are sure of getting yourself out of the coffin, I am sure of getting you out of the grave. The gravedigger is a drunkard and a friend of mine. He is Father Mestienne. An old son of the old vine. The gravedigger puts the dead in the grave, and I put the gravedigger in my pocket. I will tell you what will take place. We shall arrive a little before dusk, three-quarters of an hour before the cemetery gates are closed. The hearse will go to the grave. I shall follow; that is my business. I will have a hammar, a chisel, and some pincers in my pocket. The hearse stops, the bearers tie a rope around your coffin and let you down. The priest says the prayers, makes the sign of the cross, sprinkles the holy water, and is off. I remain alone with Father Mestienne. He is my friend, I tell you. One of two things; either he will be drunk, or he will not be drunk. If he is not drunk, I say to him: come and take a drink before the *Good Quince* is shut. I get him away, I fuddle him; Father Mestienne is not long in getting fuddled, he is always half way. I lay him under the table, I take his card from him to return to the cemetery with, and I come back without him. You will have only me to deal with. If he is drunk, I say to him: be off. I'll do your work. He goes away, and I pull you out of the hole."

Jean Valjean extended his hand, upon which Fauchelevent threw himself with a rustic outburst of touching devotion.

"It is settled, Father Fauchelevent. All will go well."

"Provided nothing goes amiss," thought Fauchelevent. "How terrible that would be!"

IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO BE A DRUNKARD TO BE IMMORTAL

Next day, as the sun was declining, the scattered passers on the Boulevard du Maine took off their hats at the passage of an old-fashioned hearse, adorned with death's-heads, cross-bones, and tear-drops. In this hearse there was a coffin covered with a white cloth, upon which was displayed a large black cross like a great dummy with hanging arms. A draped carriage, in which might be seen a priest in a surplice, and a choir-boy in a red calotte, followed. Two bearers in grey uniform with black trimmings walked on the right and left of the hearse. In the rear came an old man dressed like a labourer, who limped. The procession moved towards the Vaugirard cemetery.

Sticking out of the man's pocket were the handle of a hammar, the blade of a cold chisel, and the double handles of a pair of pincers.

Fauchelevent limped behind the hearse, very well satisfied. His two twin plots, one with the nuns, the other with M. Madeleine, one for the convent, the other against it, had succeeded equally well. Jean Valjean's calmness had that powerful tranquillity which is contagious. Fauchelevent had now no doubt of success. What remained to be done was nothing. Within two years he had fuddled the gravedigger ten times, good Father Mestienne, a rubicund old fellow. Father Mestienne was play for him. He did what he liked with him. He got him drunk at will and at his fancy. Mestienne saw through Fauchelevent's eyes. Fauchelevent's security was complete.

At the moment the convoy entered the avenue leading to the cemetery, Fauchelevent, happy, looked at the hearse and rubbed his big hands together, saying in an undertone:

"Here's a farce!"

Suddenly the hearse stopped; they were at the gate. It was necessary to exhibit the burial permit. The undertaker whispered with the porter of the cemetery. During this colloquy, which always causes a delay of a minute or two, somebody, an unknown man, came and placed himself behind the hearse at Fauchelevent's side. He was a working-man, who wore a vest with large pockets, and had a pick under his arm.

Fauchelevent looked at this unknown man.

"Who are you?" he asked.

The man answered:

"The gravedigger."

Should a man survive a cannon-shot through his breast, he would present the appearance that Fauchelevent did.

"The gravedigger?"

"Yes."

"You!"

"Me."

"The gravedigger is Father Mestienne."

"He was."

"How! he was?"

"He is dead."

Fauchelevent was ready for anything but this, that a gravedigger could die. It is, however, true; gravediggers themselves die. By dint of digging graves for others, they open their own.

Fauchelevent remained speechless. He had hardly the strength to stammer out:

"But it's not possible!"

"It is so."

"But," repeated he, feebly, "the gravedigger is Father Mestienne."

"After Napoleon, Louis XVIII. After Mestienne, Gribier. Peasant, my name is Gribier."

Fauchelevent grew pale; he stared at Gribier.

He was a long, thin, livid man, perfectly funereal. He had the appearance of a broken-down doctor turned gravedigger.

Fauchelevent burst out laughing.

"Ah! what droll things happen! Father Mestienne is dead. Little Father Mestienne is dead, but hurrah for little Father Lenoir! You know what little Father Lenoir is? It is the mug of red for a six spot. It is the mug of Surêne, zounds! real Paris Surêne. So he is dead, old Mestienne! I am sorry for it; he was a jolly fellow. But you too, you are a jolly fellow. Isn't that so, comrade? we will go and take a drink together, right away."

The man answered: "I have studied, I have graduated. I never drink."

The hearse had started, and was rolling along the main avenue of the cemetery.

Fauchelevent had slackened his pace. He limped still more from anxiety than from infirmity.

The gravedigger walked before him.

Fauchelevent again scrutinised the unexpected Gribier.

He was one of those men who, though young, have an old appearance, and who, though thin, are very strong.

"Comrade!" cried Fauchelevent.

The man turned.

"I am the gravedigger of the convent."

"My colleague," said the man.

Fauchelevent, illiterate, but very keen, understood that he had to do with a very formidable species, a good talker.

He mumbled out:

"Is it so, Father Mestienne is dead?"

The man answered:

"Perfectly. The good God consulted his list of bills payable. It was Father Mestienne's turn. Father Mestienne is dead."

Fauchelevent repeated mechanically.

"The good God."

"The good God," said the man authoritatively. "What the philosophers call the Eternal Father; the Jacobins, the Supreme Being."

"Are we not going to make each other's acquaintance?" stammered Fauchelevent.

"It is made. You are a peasant, I am a Parisian."

"We are not acquainted as long as we have not drunk together. He who empties his glass empties his heart. Come and drink with me. You can't refuse."

"Business first."

Fauchelevent said to himself: I am lost.

They were now only a few rods from the path that led to the nun's corner.

The gravedigger continued:

"Peasant, I have seven youngsters that I must feed. As they must eat, I must not drink."

And he added with the satisfaction of a serious being who is making a sententious phrase:

"Their hunger is the enemy of my thirst."

The hearse turned a huge cypress, left the main path, took a little one, entered upon the grounds, and was lost in a thicket. This indicated the immediate proximity of the grave. Fauchelevent slackened his pace, but could not slacken that of the hearse. Luckily the mellow soil, wet by the winter rains, stuck to the wheels, and made the track heavy.

He approached the gravedigger.

"They have such a good little Argenteuil wine," suggested Fauchelevent.

"Villager," continued the man, "I ought not to be a gravedigger. My father was porter at the Prytanée. He intended me for literature. But he was unfortunate. He met with losses at the Bourse, I was obliged to renounce the condition of an author. However I am still a public scribe."

"But then you are not the gravedigger?" replied Fauchelevent, catching at a straw, feeble as it was.

"One does not prevent the other. I cumulate."

Fauchelevent did not understand this last word.

"Let us go and drink," said he.

Here an observation is necessary. Fauchelevent whatever was his anguish, proposed to drink, but did not explain himself on one point; who should pay? Ordinarily Fauchelevent proposed, and Father Mestienne paid. A proposal to drink resulted evidently from the new situation produced by the fact of the new gravedigger, and this proposal he must make; but the old gardener left, not unintentionally, the proverbial quarter an of hour of Rabelais in the shade. As for him, Fauchelevent, however excited he was, he did not care about paying.

The gravedigger went on with a smile of superiority:

"We must live. I accepted the succession of Father Mestienne. When one has almost finished his classes, he is a philosopher. To the labour of my hand, I have added the labour of my arm. I have my little writer's shop at the Market in the Rue de Sèvres. You know? the market of the Parapluies. All the cooks of the Croix Rouge come to me; I patch up their declarations to their true loves. In the morning I write love letters; in the evening I dig graves. Such is life, countryman."

The hearse advanced; Fauchelevent, full of anxiety, looked about him on all sides. Great drops of sweat were falling from his forehead.

"However," continued the gravedigger, "one cannot serve two mistresses; I must choose between the pen and the pick. The pick hurts my hand."

The hearse stopped.

The choir-boy got out of the mourning carriage, then the priest.

One of the forward wheels of the hearse mounted on a little heap of earth, beyond which was seen an open grave.

"Here is a farce!" repeated Fauchelevent in consternation.

IN THE NARROW HOUSE

Who was in the coffin? We know. Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean had arranged it so that he could live in it, and could breathe a very little.

It is a strange thing to what extent an easy conscience gives calmness in other respects. The entire combination prearranged by Jean Valjean had been executed, and executed well, since the night before. He counted, as did Fauchelevent, upon Father Mestienne. He had no doubt of the result. Never was a situation more critical, never calmness more complete.

The four boards of the coffin exhaled a kind of terrible peace. It seemed as if something of the repose of the dead had entered into the tranquillity of Jean Valjean.

From within that coffin he had been able to follow, and he had followed, all the phases of the fearful drama which he was playing with Death.

Soon after Fauchelevent had finished nailing down the upper board, Jean Valjean had felt himself carried out, then wheeled along. By the diminished jolting, he had felt that he was passing from the pavement to the hard ground; that is to say, that he was leaving the streets and entering upon the boulevards. By a dull sound, he had divined that they were crossing the bridge of Austerlitz. At the first stop he had comprehended that they were entering the cemetery; at the second stop he had said: here is the grave.

He felt that hands hastily seized the coffin, then a harsh scraping upon the boards; he concluded that that was a rope which they were tying around the coffin to let it down into the excavation.

Then he felt a kind of dizziness.

Probably the bearer and the gravedigger had tipped the coffin and let the head down before the feet. He returned fully to himself on feeling that he was horizontal and motionless. He had touched the bottom

He felt a certain chill.

A voice arose above him, icy and solemn. He heard pass away, some Latin words which he did not understand, pronounced so slowly that he could catch them one after another:

"Qui dormiunt in terræ pulvere, evigilabunt; alii in vitam æternam, et alii in opprobrium, ut videant semper."

A child's voice said:

"De profundis."

The deep voice recommenced:

"Requiem æternam dona ei, Domine."

The child's voice responded:

"Et lux perpetua luceat ei."

He heard upon the board which covered him something like the gentle patter of a few drops of rain. It was probably the holy water.

He thought: "This will soon be finished. A little more patience. The priest is going away. Fauchelevent will take Mestienne away to drink. They will leave me. Then Fauchelevent will come back alone, and I shall get out. That will take a good hour."

The deep voice resumed.

"Requiescat in pace."

And the child's voice said:

"Amen."

Jean Valjean, intently listening, perceived something like receding steps.

"Now there they go," thought he. "I am alone."

All at once he heard a sound above his head which seemed to him like a clap of thunder.

It was a spadeful of earth falling upon the coffin.

A second spadeful of earth fell.

One of the holes by which he breathed was stopped up.

A third spadeful of earth fell.

Then a fourth.

There are things stronger than the strongest man. Jean Valjean lost consciousness.

IN WHICH WILL BE FOUND THE ORIGIN OF THE SAYING: DON'T LOSE YOUR CARD

Let us see what occurred over the coffin in which Jean Valjean lay.

When the hearse had departed and the priest and the choir-boy had got into the carriage, and were gone, Fauchelevent, who had never taken his eyes off the gravedigger, saw him stoop, and grasp his spade, which was standing upright in the heap of earth.

Hereupon, Fauchelevent, formed a supreme resolve.

Placing himself between the grave and the gravedigger, and folding his arms, he said:

"I'll pay for it!"

The gravedigger eyed him with amazement, and replied:

"What, peasant?"

Fauchelevent repeated:

"I'll pay for it."

"For what?"

"For the wine."

"What wine?"

"The Argenteuil."

"Where's the Argenteuil?"

"At the Good Quince."

"Go to the devil!" said the gravedigger.

And he threw a spadeful of earth upon the coffin.

The coffin gave back a hollow sound. Fauchelevent felt himself stagger, and nearly fell into the grave. In a voice in which the strangling sound of the death-rattle began to be heard, he cried:

"Come, comrade, before the Good Quince closes!"

The gravedigger took up another spadeful of earth. Fauchelevent continued:

"I'll pay," and he seized the gravedigger by the arm.

"Hark ye, comrade," he said, "I am the gravedigger of the convent, and have come to help you. It's a job we can do at night. Let us take a drink first."

And as he spoke, even while clinging desperately to this urgent effort, he asked himself, with some misgiving: "And even should he drink—will he get tipsy?"

"Good rustic," said the gravedigger, "if you insist, I consent. We'll have a drink, but after my work, never before it."

And he tossed his spade again. Fauchelevent held him.

"It is Argenteuil at six sous the pint!"

"Ah, bah!" said the gravedigger, you're a bore. Ding-dong, ding-dong, the same thing over and over again; that's all you can say. Be off, about your business."

And he threw in the second spadeful.

Fauchelevent had reached that point where a man knows no longer what he is saying.

"Oh! come on, and take a glass, since I'm the one to pay," he again repeated.

"When we've put the child to bed," said the gravedigger.

He tossed in the third spadeful: then, plunging his spade into the earth, he added:

"You see, now, it's going to be cold to-night, and the dead one would cry out after us, if we were to plant her there without good covering."

At this moment, in the act of filling his spade, the gravedigger stooped low, and the pocket of his vest gaped open.

The bewildered eyes of Fauchelevent rested mechanically on this pocket, and remained fixed.

The sun was not yet hidden behind the horizon, and there was still light enough to distinguish something white in the gaping pocket.

All the lightning which the eye of a Picardy peasant can contain flashed into the pupils of Fauchelevent. A new idea had struck him.

Without the gravedigger, who was occupied with his spadeful of earth, perceiving him, he slipped his hand from behind into the pocket, and took from him the white object it contained.

The gravedigger flung into the grave the fourth spadeful.

Just as he was turning to take the fifth, Fauchelevent, looking at him with imperturbable calmness, asked:

"By the way, my new friend, have you got your card?"

The gravedigger stopped.

"What card?"

"The sun is setting."

"Well let him put on his night-cap."

"The cemetery-gate will be closed."

"Well, what then?"

"Have you your card?"

"Oh! my card!" said the gravedigger, and he felt in his pocket.

Having rummaged one pocket he tried another. From these, he proceeded to try his watch-fobs, exploring the first, and turning the second inside out.

"No!" said he, "no! I haven't got my card. I must have forgotten it."

"Fifteen francs fine!" said Fauchelevent.

The gravedigger turned green. Green is the paleness of people naturally livid.

"Oh, good-gracious God, what a fool I am!" he exclaimed. "Fifteen francs fine!"

"Three hundred-sou pieces." said Fauchelevent.

The gravedigger dropped his spade.

Fauchelevent's turn had come.

"Come! come, recruit," said Fauchelevent, "never despair; there's nothing to kill oneself about, and feed the worms. Fifteen francs are fifteen francs, and beside, you may not have them to pay. I am an old hand, and you a new one. I know all the tricks and traps and turns and twists of the business. I'll give you a friend's advice. One thing is clear—the sun is setting—and the graveyard will be closed in five minutes."

"That's true," replied the gravedigger.

"Five minutes is not time enough for you to fill the grave— it's as deep as the very devil—and get out of this before the gate is shut."

"You're right."

"In that case, there is fifteen francs fine."

"Fifteen francs!"

"But you have time. . . . Where do you live?"

"Just by the barrière. Fifteen minutes' walk. Number 87 Rue de Vaugirard."

"You have time, if you will hang your toggery about your neck, to get out at once."

"That's true."

"Once outside of the gate, you scamper home, get your card, come back, and the gatekeeper will let you in again. Having your card, there's nothing to pay. Then you can bury your dead man. I'll stay here, and watch him while you're gone, to see that he doesn't run away."

"I owe you my life, peasant!"

"Be off, then quick!" said Fauchelevent.

The gravedigger overcome with gratitude shook his hands, and started at a run.

When the gravedigger had disappeared through the bushes, Fauchelevent listened until his footsteps died away, and then, bending over the grave, called out in a low voice:

"Father Madeleine!"

No answer.

Fauchelevent shuddered. He dropped rather than clambered down into the grave, threw himself upon the head of the coffin, and cried out:

"Are you there?"

Silence in the coffin.

Fauchelevent, no longer able to breathe for the shiver that was on him, took his cold chisel and hammer, and wrenched off the top board. The face of Jean Valjean could be seen in the twilight, his eyes closed and his cheeks colourless.

Fauchelevent's hair stood erect with alarm; he rose to his feet, and then tottered with his back against the side of the grave, ready to sink down upon the coffin. He looked upon Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean lay there pallid and motionless.

Fauchelevent murmured in a voice as low as a whisper:

"He is dead!"

Then straightening himself, and crossing his arms so violently, that his clenched fists sounded against his shoulders, he exclaimed:

"This is the way I have saved him!"

Then the poor old man began to sob, talking aloud to himself the while, for it is a mistake to think that talking to one's self is not natural. Powerful emotions often speak aloud.

"It's Father Mestienne's fault. What did he die for, the fool? What was the use of going off in that way, just when no one expected it? It was he who killed poor M. Madeleine. Father Madeleine! He is in the coffin. He's settled. There's an end of it. Now, what's the sense of such things? Good God! he's dead! Yes, and his little girl—what am I to do with her? What will the fruit-woman say? That such a man could die in that way. Good Heaven, is it possible! When I think that he put himself under my cart! . . . Father Madeleine! Father Madeleine! Mercy, he's suffocated, I said so—but, he wouldn't believe me. Now, here's a pretty piece of business! He's dead—one of the very best men God ever made; aye, the best, the very best! And his little girl! I'm not going back there again. I'm going to stay here. To have done such a thing as this! It's well worth while to be two old greybeards, in order to be two old fools. But, to begin with, how did he manage to get into the convent—that's where it started. Such things shouldn't be done. Father Madeleine!

Father Madeleine! Father Madeleine! Madeleine! Monsieur Madeleine! Monsieur Mayor! He doesn't hear me. Get yourself out of this now, if you please."

And he tore his hair.

At a distance, through the trees, a harsh grating sound was heard. It was the gate of the cemetery closing.

Fauchelevent again bent over Jean Valjean, but suddenly started back with all the recoil that was possible in a grave. Jean Valjean's eyes were open, and gazing at him.

To behold death is terrifying, and to see a sudden restoration is nearly as much so. Fauchelevent became cold and white as a stone, haggard and utterly disconcerted by all these powerful emotions, and not knowing whether he had the dead or the living to deal with, stared at Jean Valjean, who in turn stared at him.

"I was falling asleep," said Jean Valjean.

And he rose to a sitting posture.

Fauchelevent dropped on his knees.

"Oh, blessed Virgin! How you frightened me!"

Then, springing again to his feet, he cried:

"Thank you, Father Madeleine!"

Jean Valjean had merely swooned. The open air had revived him.

Joy is the reflex of terror. Fauchelevent had nearly as much difficulty as Jean Valjean in coming to himself.

"Then you're not dead! Oh, what good sense you have! I called you so loudly that you got over it. When I saw you with your eyes shut, I said, 'Well, there now! he's suffocated!' I should have gone raving mad—mad enough for a straitjacket. They'd have put me in the Bicêtre. What would you have had me do, if you had been dead? And your little girl! the fruit-woman would have understood nothing about it! A child plumped into her lap, and its grandfather dead! What a story to tell! By all the saints in heaven, what a story! Ah! but you're alive—that's the best of it."

"I am cold," said Jean Valjean.

These words recalled Fauchelevent completely to the real state of affairs, which were urgent. These two men, even when restored, felt, without knowing it, a peculiar agitation and a strange inward trouble, which was but the sinister bewilderment of the place.

"Let us get away from here at once," said Fauchelevent.

He thrust his hand into his pocket, and drew from it a flask with which he was provided.

"But a drop of this first!" said he.

The flask completed what the open air had begun. Jean Valjean took a swallow of brandy, and felt thoroughly restored.

He got out of the coffin, and assisted Fauchelevent to nail down the lid again. Three minutes afterwards, they were out of the grave.

After this, Fauchelevant was calm enough. He took his time. The cemetery was closed. There was no fear of the return of Gribier the gravedigger. That recruit was at home hunting up his "card," and rather unlikely to find it, as it was in Fauchelevent's pocket. Without his card, he could not get back into the cemetery.

Fauchelevent took the spade and Jean Valjean the pick, and together they buried the empty coffin.

When the grave was filled, Fauchelevent said to Jean Valjean:

"Come, let us go; I'll keep the spade, you take the pick."

Night was coming on rapidly.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMINATION

An hour later, in the depth of night, two men and a child stood in front of No. 62, Petite Rue Picpus. The elder of the men lifted the knocker and rapped.

It was Fauchelevent, Jean Valjean, and Cosette.

The two men had gone to look for Cosette at the shop of the fruiteress of the Rue de Chemin Vert, where Fauchelevent had left her on the preceding evening. Cosette had passed the twenty-four hours wondering what it all meant and trembling in silence. She trembled so much that she had not wept, nor had she tasted food nor slept. The worthy fruit-woman had asked her a thousand questions without obtaining any other answer than a sad look that never varied. Cosette did not let a word of all she had heard and seen, in the last two days, escape her. She divined that a crisis had come. She felt, in her very heart, that she must be "good." Who has not experienced the supreme effect of these two words pronounced in a certain tone in the ear of some frightened creature, "Don't speak!" Fear is mute. Besides, no one ever keeps a secret so well as a child.

But when, after those mournful four-and-twenty hours, she again saw Jean Valjean, she uttered such a cry of joy that any thoughtful person hearing her would have divined in it an escape from some yawning gulf.

Fauchelevent belonged to the convent and knew all the pass-words. Every door opened before him.

Thus was that doubly fearful problem solved of getting out and getting in again.

The porter, who had his instructions, opened the little side door which served to communicate between the court and the garden, and which, twenty years ago, could still be seen from the street, in the wall at the extremity of the court, facing the porte-cochère. The porter admitted all three by this door, and from that point they went to this private inner parlour, where Fauchelevent had, on the previous evening, received the orders of the prioress.

The prioress, rosary in hand, was awaiting them. A mother, with her veil down, stood near her. A modest taper lighted, or one might almost say, pretended to light up the parlour.

The prioress scrutinised Jean Valjean. Nothing scans so carefully as a downcast eye.

Then she proceeded to question:

"You are the brother?"

"Yes, reverend mother," replied Fauchelevent.

"What is your name?"

Fauchelevent replied:

"Ultimus Fauchelevent!"

He had, in reality, had a brother named Ultimus, who was dead.

"From what part of the country are you?"

Fauchelevent answered:

"From Picquigny, near Amiens."

"What is your age?"

Fauchelevent answered:

"Fifty."

"What is your business?"

Fauchelevent answered:

"Gardener."

"Are you a true Christian?"

Fauchelevent answered:

"All of our family are such."

"Is this your little girl?"

Fauchelevent answered:

"Yes, reverend mother."

"You are her father?"

Fauchelevent answered:

"Her grandfather."

The mother said to the prioress in an undertone:

"He answers well."

Jean Valjean had not spoken a word.

The prioress looked at Cosette attentively, and then said aside to the mother—

"She will be homely."

The two mothers talked together very low for a few minutes in a corner of the parlour, and then the prioress turned and said—

"Father Fauvent, you will have another knee-cap and bell. We need two, now."

So, next morning, two little bells were heard tinkling in the garden, and the nuns could not keep from lifting a corner of their veils. They saw two men digging side by side, in the lower part of the garden under the trees—Fauvent and another. Immense event! The silence was broken, so far as to say—

"It's an assistant-gardener!"

The mothers added:

"He is Father Fauvent's brother."

In fact, Jean Valjean was regularly installed; he had the leather knee-cap and the bell; henceforth he had his commission. His name was Ultimus Fauchelevent.

The strongest recommendation for Cosette's admission had been the remark of the prioress: *She will be homely.*

The prioress having uttered this prediction, immediately took Cosette into her friendship and gave her a place in the school building as a charity pupil.

There is nothing not entirely logical in this.

It is all in vain to have no mirrors in convents; women are conscious of their own appearance; young girls who know that they are pretty do not readily become nuns; the inclination to the calling being in inverse proportion to good looks, more is expected from the homely than from the handsome ones. Hence a marked preference for the homely.

This whole affair elevated good old Fauchelevent greatly; he had achieved a triple success;—in the eyes of Jean Valjean whom he had rescued and sheltered; with the gravedigger, Gribier, who said he had saved him from a fine; and, at the convent, which, thanks to him, in retaining the coffin of Mother Crucifixion under the altar, eluded Cæsar and satisfied God. There was a coffin with a body in it at the Petit Picpus, and a coffin without a body in the Vaugirard cemetery. Public order was greatly disturbed thereby, undoubtedly, but nobody perceived it. As for the convent, its gratitude to Fauchelevent was deep. Fauchelevent became the best of servants and the most precious of gardeners.

THE CLOSE

Cosette, in becoming a pupil at the convent, had to assume the dress of the school girls. Jean Valjean succeeded in having the garments which she had laid aside, given to him. It was the same mourning suit he had carried for her to put on when she left the Thénardiers. It was not much worn. Jean Valjean rolled up these garments, as well as the woollen stockings and shoes, with much camphor and other aromatic substances of which there is such an abundance in convents, and packed them in a small valise which he managed to procure. He put this valise in a chair near his bed, and always kept the key of it in his pocket.

If those holy women had possessed aught of the discrimination of Javert, they might have remarked, in the course of time, that when there was any little errand to run outside for on account of the garden, it was always the elder Fauchelevent, old, infirm, and lame as he was, who went, and never the other; but, whether it be that eyes continually fixed upon God cannot play the spy, or whether they were too constantly employed in watching one another, they noticed nothing.

However, Jean Valjean was well satisfied to keep quiet and still. Javert watched the quarter for a good long month.

The convent was to Jean Valjean like an island surrounded by wide waters. These four walls were, henceforth, the world to him. Within them he could see enough of the sky to be calm, and enough of Cosette to be happy.

A very pleasant life began again for him.

Everything around him, this quiet garden, these balmy flowers, these children, shouting with joy, these meek and simple women, this silent cloister, gradually entered into all his being, and, little by little, his soul subsided into silence like this cloister, into fragrance like these flowers, into peace like this garden, into simplicity like these women, into joy like these children. And then he reflected that two houses of God had received him in succession at the two critical moments of his life, the first when every door was closed and human society repelled him; the second, when human society again howled upon his track, and the galleys once more gaped for him; and that, had it not been for the first, he should have fallen back into crime, and, had it not been for the second, into punishment.

His whole heart melted in gratitude, and he loved more and more.

Several years passed thus. Cosette was growing.

MARIUS

BOOK I—PARIS ATOMISED

LITTLE GAVROCHE

About eight or nine years after the events narrated in the second part of this story, there was seen, on the Boulevard du Temple, and in the neighbourhood of the Chateau d'Eau, a little boy of eleven or twelve years of age. This child was well muffled up in a man's pair of pantaloons, but he had not got them from his father, and in a woman's chemise, which was not an inheritance from his mother. Strangers had clothed him in these rags out of charity. Still, he had a father and a mother. But his father never thought of him, and his mother did not love him. He was one of those children so deserving of pity from all, who have fathers and mothers, and yet are orphans.

This little boy never felt so happy as when in the street. The pavement was not so hard to him as the heart of his mother.

His parents had thrown him out into life with a kick.

He had quite ingenuously spread his wings, and taken flight.

He was a boisterous, pallid, nimble, wide-awake, roguish urchin, with an air at once vivacious and sickly. He went, came, sang, played pitch and toss, scraped the gutters, stole a little, but he did it gaily, like the cats and the sparrows, laughed when people called him an errand-boy, and got angry when they called him a ragamuffin. He had no shelter, no food, no fire, no love, but he was light-hearted because he was free.

When these poor creatures are men, the millstone of our social system almost always comes in contact with them, and grinds them, but while they are children they escape because they are little. The smallest hole saves them.

However, deserted as this lad was, it happened sometimes, every two or three months, that he would say to himself: "Come, I'll go and see my mother!" Then he would leave the Boulevard, the Cirque, the Porte Saint Martin, go down along the quays, cross the bridges, reach the suburbs, walk as far as the Salpêtrière, and arrive—where? Precisely at that double number, 50-52, which is known to the reader, the Gorbeau building.

At the period referred to, the tenement No. 50-52, usually empty, and permanently decorated with the placard "Rooms to let," was, for a wonder, tenanted by several persons who, in all other respects, as is always the case at Paris, had no relation to or connection with each other. They all belonged to that indigent class which begins with the small bourgeois in embarrassed circumstances, and descends, from grade to grade of wretchedness, through the lower strata of society, until it reaches those two beings in whom all the material things of civilisation terminate, the scavenger and the rag-picker.

The "landlady" of the time of Jean Valjean was dead, and had been replaced by another exactly like her. I do not remember what philosopher it was who said: "There is never any lack of old women."

The new old woman was called Madame Burgon, and her life had been remarkable for nothing except a dynasty of three paroquets, which had in succession wielded the sceptre of her affections.

Among those who lived in the building, the wretchedest of all were a family of four persons, father, mother, and two daughters nearly grown, all four lodging in the same garret room, one of those cells of which we have already spoken.

This family at first sight presented nothing very peculiar but its extreme destitution; the father, in renting the room, had given his name as Jondrette. Some time after his moving in, which had singularly resembled, to borrow the memorable expression of the landlady, the entrance of *nothing at all,* this Jondrette said to the old woman, who, like her predecessor, was, at the same time, portress and swept the stairs: "Mother So and So, if anybody should come and ask for a Pole or an Italian or, perhaps, a Spaniard, that is for me."

Now, this family was the family of our sprightly little barefooted urchin. When he came there, he found distress and, what is sadder still, no smile; a cold hearthstone and cold hearts. When he came in, they would ask: "Where have you come from?" He would answer: "From the street." When he was going away they would ask him: "Where are you going to?" He would answer: "Into the street." His mother would say to him: "What have you come here for?"

The child lived, in this absence of affection, like those pale plants that spring up in cellars. He felt no suffering from this mode of existence, and bore no ill-will to anybody. He did not know how a father and mother ought to be.

But yet his mother loved his sisters.

We had forgotten to say that on the Boulevard du Temple this boy went by the name of little Gavroche. Why was his name Gavroche? Probably because his father's name was Jondrette.

To break all links seems to be the instinct of some wretched families. Nevertheless, let us remember Gavroche; we shall meet him again.

The room occupied by the Jondrettes in the Gorbeau tenement was the last at the end of the hall. The adjoining cell was tenanted by a very poor young man who was called Monsieur Marius.

Let us see who and what Monsieur Marius was.

BOOK II—THE GRAND BOURGEOIS

NINETY YEARS OLD AND THIRTY-TWO TEETH

In the Rue Boucherat, Rue de Normandie, and Rue de Saintonge, there still remain a few old inhabitants who preserve a memory of a fine old man named M. Gillenormand, and who like to talk about him. This man was old when they were young. This figure, to those who look sadly upon that vague swarm of shadows which they call the past, has not yet entirely disappeared from the labyrinth of streets in the neighbourhood of the Temple, to which, under Louis XIV., were given the names of all the provinces of France, precisely as in our days the names of all the capitals of Europe have been given to the streets in the new Quartier Tivoli; an advance, be it said by the way, in which progress is visible.

M. Gillenormand, who was as much alive as any man can be, in 1831, was one of those men who have become curiosities, simply because they have lived a long time; and who are strange, because formerly they were like everybody else, and now they are no longer like anybody else. He was a peculiar old man, and very truly a man of another age—the genuine bourgeois of the eighteenth century, a very perfect specimen, a little haughty, wearing his good old bourgeoisie as marquises wear their marquisates. He had passed his ninetieth year, walked erect, spoke in a loud voice, saw clearly, drank hard, ate, slept, and snored. He had every one of his thirty-two teeth. He wore glasses only when reading. He had had two wives; by the first a daughter, who had remained unmarried, and by the second another daughter, who died when about thirty years old, and who had married for love, or luck, or otherwise, a soldier of fortune, who had served in the armies of the republic and the empire, had won the cross at Austerlitz, and been made colonel at Waterloo. *"This is the disgrace of my family,"* said the old bourgeois. He took a great deal of snuff, and had a peculiar skill in ruffling his lace frill with the back of his hand. He had very little belief in God.

TWO DO NOT MAKE A PAIR

As to the two daughters of Monsieur Gillenormand, we have just spoken of them. They were born ten years apart. In their youth they resembled each other very little; and in character as well as in countenance, were as far from being sisters as possible. The younger was a cheerful soul, attracted towards everything that is bright, busy with flowers, poetry, and music, carried away into the glories of space, enthusiastic, ethereal, affianced from childhood in the ideal to a dim heroic figure. The elder had also her chimera; in the azure depth she saw a contractor, some good, coarse commissary, very rich, a husband splendidly stupid, a million-made man, or even a prefect; receptions at the prefecture, an usher of the ante-chamber, with the chain on his neck, official balls, harangues at the mayor's, to be *"Madame la préfete,"* this whirled in her imagination. The two sisters wandered thus, each in her own fancy, when they were young girls. Both had wings, one like an angel, the other like a goose.

No ambition is fully realised, here below at least. No paradise becomes terrestrial at the period in which we live. The younger had married the man of her dreams, but she was dead. The elder was not married.

At the moment she makes her entry into the story which we are relating, she was an old piece of virtue, an incombustible prude, one of the sharpest noses and one of the most obtuse minds which could be discovered. A characteristic incident. Outside of the immediate family nobody had ever known her first name. She was called *Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder.*

We must say that in growing old, Mademoiselle Gillenormand had rather gained than lost. This is the case with passive natures. She had never been peevish, which is a relative goodness; and then, years wear off angles, and the softening of time had come upon her. She was sad with an obscure sadness of which she had not the secret herself. There was in her whole person the stupor of a life ended but never commenced.

She kept her father's house. These households of an old man and an old maid are not rare, and always have the touching aspect of two feeblenesses leaning upon each other.

There was besides in the house, between this old maid and this old man, a child, a little boy, always trembling and mute before M. Gillenormand. M. Gillenormand never spoke to this child but with stern voice, and sometimes with uplifted cane: *"Here! Monsieur—rascal, black-guard, come here! Answer me, rogue! Let me see you, scapegrace!"* etc. etc. He idolised him.

It was his grandson. We shall see this child again.

BOOK III—THE GRANDFATHER AND THE GRANDSON

ONE OF THE RED SPECTRES OF THAT TIME

Whoever, at that day, had passed through the little city of Vernon, and walked over that beautiful monumental bridge which will be very soon replaced, let us hope, by some horrid wire bridge, would have noticed, as his glance fell from the top of the parapet, a man of about fifty, with a leather casque on his head, dressed in pantaloons and waistcoat of coarse grey cloth, to which something yellow was stitched which had been a red ribbon, shod in wooden shoes, browned by the sun, his face almost black and his hair almost white, a large scar upon his forehead extending down his cheek, bent, bowed down, older than his years, walking nearly every day with a spade and a pruning knife in his hand, in one of those walled compartments, in the vicinity of the bridge, which, like a chain of terraces border the left bank of the Seine,—charming inclosures full of flowers of which one would say, if they were much larger, they are gardens, and if they were a little smaller, they are bouquets. All these inclosures are bounded by the river on one side and by a house on the other. The man in the waistcoat and wooden shoes of whom we have just spoken lived, about the year 1817, in the smallest of these inclosures and the humblest of these houses. He lived there solitary and alone, in silence and in poverty, with a woman who was neither young nor old, neither beautiful nor ugly, neither peasant nor bourgeois, who waited upon him. The square of earth which he called his garden was celebrated in the town for the beauty of the flowers which he cultivated in it. Flowers were his occupation.

By dint of labour, perseverance, attention, and pails of water, he had succeeded in creating after the Creator, and had invented certain tulips and dahlias which seemed to have been forgotten by Nature. He was ingenious; he anticipated Soulange Bodin in the formation of little clumps of heather earth for the culture of rare and precious shrubs from America and China. By break of day, in summer, he was in his walks, digging, pruning, weeding, watering, walking in the midst of his flowers with an air of kindness, sadness, and gentleness, sometimes dreamy and motionless for whole hours, listening to the song of a bird in a tree, the prattling of a child in a house, or oftener with his eyes fixed on some drop of dew at the end of a spear of grass, of which the sun was making a carbuncle. His table was very frugal, and he drank more milk than wine. An urchin would make him yield, his servant scolded him. He was timid, so much so as to seem unsociable, he rarely went out, and saw nobody but the poor who rapped at his window, and his curé, Abbé Mabeuf, a good old man. Still, if any of the inhabitants of the city or strangers, whoever they might be, curious to see his tulips and roses, knocked at his little house, he opened his door with a smile. This was the brigand of the Loire.

Whoever, at the same time, had read the military memoirs, the biographies, the *Moniteur,* and the bulletins of the Grand Army, would have been struck by a name which appears rather often, the name of George Pontmercy. When quite young, this George Pontmercy was a soldier in the regiment of Saintonge. The revolution broke out. The regiment of Saintonge was in the Army of the Rhine. For the old regiments of the monarchy kept their province names even after the fall of the monarchy, and were not brigaded until 1794. Pontmercy fought at Spires, at Worms, at Neustadt, at Turkheim, at Alzey, at Mayence where he was one of the two hundred who formed Houchard's rear-guard. He with eleven others held their ground against the Prince of Hesse's corps behind the old rampart of Andernach, and only fell back upon the bulk of the army when the hostile cannon had effected a breach from the top of the parapet to the slope of the glacis. He was under Kleber at Marchiennes, and at the battle of Mont Palissel, where he had his arm broken by a musket-ball. Then he passed to the Italian frontier, and he was one of the thirty grenadiers who defended the Col di Tende with Joubert. Joubert was made Adjutant-General, and Pontmercy Second-Lieutenant. Pontmercy was by the side of Berthier in the midst of the storm of balls on that day of Lodi of which Bonaparte said: *Berthier was cannoneer, cavalier, and grenadier.* He saw his old general, Joubert, fall at Novi, at the moment when, with uplifted sword, he was crying: Forward! Being embarked with his company, through the necessities of the campaign, in a pinnace, which was on the way from Genoa to some little port on the coast, he fell into a wasp's-nest of seven or eight English vessels. The Genoese captain wanted to throw the guns into the sea, hide the soldiers in the hold, and slip through in the dark like a merchantman. Pontmercy had the colours seized to the halyards of the ensign-staff, and passed proudly under the guns of the British frigates. Fifty miles further on, his boldness increasing, he attacked with his pinnace and captured a large English transport carrying troops to Sicily, so loaded with men and horses that the vessel was full to the hatches. In 1805, he was in that division of Malher which captured Günzburg from the Archduke Ferdinand. At Weltingen he received in his arms under a shower of balls Colonel Maupetit, who was mortally wounded at the head of the 9th Dragoons. He distinguished himself at Austerlitz in that wonderful march in echelon under the enemy's fire. When the cavalry of the Russian Imperial Guard crushed a battalion of the 4th of the Line, Pontmercy was one of those who revenged the repulse, and overthrew the Guard. The emperor gave him the cross. Pontmercy successively saw Wurmser made prisoner in Mantua, Melas in Alexandria, and Mack in Ulm. He was in the eighth corps, of the Grand Army, which Mortier commanded, and which took Hamburg. Then he passed into the 55th of the Line, which was the old Flanders regiment. At Eylau, he was in the churchyard where the heroic captain Louis Hugo, uncle of the author of this book, sustained alone with his company of eighty-three men, for two hours, the whole effort of the enemy's army. Pontmercy was one of the three who came out of that churchyard alive. He was at Friedland. Then he saw Moscow, then the Beresina, then Lutzen, Bautzen, Dresden, Wachau, Leipsic, and the defiles of Glenhausen, then Montmirail, Chateau-Thierry, Craon, the banks of the Marne, the banks of the Aisne, and the formidable position at Laon. At Arnay le Duc, a captain, he sabred ten cossacks, and saved, not his general, but his corporal. He was wounded on that occasion, and twenty-seven splinters were extracted from his left arm alone. Eight days before the capitulation of Paris, he exchanged with a comrade, and entered the cavalry. He had what was called under the old regime *the double-hand,* that is to say equal skill in managing, as a soldier, the sabre or the musket, as an officer, a squadron or a battalion. It is this skill, perfected by military education, which gives rise to certain special arms, the dragoons, for instance, who are both cavalry and infantry. He accompanied Napoleon to the island of Elba. At Waterloo he led a squadron of cuirassiers in Dubois' brigade. He it was who took the colours from the Lunenburg battalion. He carried the colours to the emperor's feet. He was covered with blood. He had received, in seizing the colours, a sabre stroke across his face. The emperor, well pleased, cried to him: *You are a Colonel, you are a Baron, you are an Officer of the Legion of Honour!* Pontmercy answered: *Sire, I thank you for my widow.* An hour afterwards, he fell in the ravine of Ohain. Now who was this George Pontmercy? He was that very brigand of the Loire.

We have already seen something of his history. After Waterloo, Pontmercy, drawn out, as will be remembered, from the sunken road of Ohain, succeeded in regaining the army, and was passed along from ambulance to ambulance to the cantonments of the Loire.

He had nothing but his very scanty half-pay as chief of squadron. He hired the smallest house he could find in Vernon. He lived there alone; how we have just seen. Under the empire, between two wars, he had found time to marry Mademoiselle Gillenormand. The old bourgeois, who really felt outraged, consented with a sigh, saying: *"The greatest families are forced to it."* In 1815, Madame Pontmercy, an admirable woman in every respect, noble and rare, and worthy of her husband, died, leaving a child. This child would have been the colonel's joy in his solitude; but the grandfather had imperiously demanded his grandson; declaring that, unless he were given up to him, he would disinherit him. The father yielded for the sake of the little boy, and not being able to have his child he set about loving flowers.

He had moreover given up everything, making no movement nor conspiring with others. He divided his thoughts between the innocent things he was doing, and the grand things he had done. He passed his time hoping for a pink or remembering Austerlitz.

M. Gillenormand had no intercourse with his son-in-law. The colonel was to him "a bandit," and he was to the colonel "a blockhead." M. Gillenormand never spoke of the colonel, unless sometimes to make mocking allusions to "his barony." It was expressly understood that Pontmercy should never endeavour to see his son or speak to him, under pain of the boy being turned away, and disinherited. To the Gillenormands, Pontmercy was pestiferous. They intended to bring up the child to their liking. The colonel did wrong perhaps to accept these conditions, but he submitted to them, thinking that he was doing right, and sacrificing himself alone.

The inheritance from the grandfather Gillenormand was a small affair, but the inheritance from Mlle. Gillenormand the elder was considerable. This aunt, who had remained single, was very rich from the maternal side, and the son of her sister was her natural heir. The child, whose name was Marius, knew that he had a father, but nothing more. Nobody spoke a word to him about him. However, in the society into which his grandfather took him, the whisperings, the hints, the winks, enlightened the little boy's mind at length; he finally comprehended something of it, and as he naturally imbibed, by a sort of infiltration and slow penetration, the ideas and opinions which formed, so to say, the air he breathed, he came little by little to think of his father only with shame and with a closed heart.

While he was thus growing up, every two or three months the colonel would escape, come furtively to Paris like a fugitive from justice breaking his ban, and go to Saint Sulpice, at the hour when Aunt Gillenormand took Marius to mass. There, trembling lest the aunt should turn round, concealed behind a pillar, motionless, not daring to breathe, he saw his child. The scarred veteran was afraid of the old maid.

From this, in fact came his connection with the curé of Vernon, Abbé Mabeuf.

This worthy priest was the brother of a warden of Saint Sulpice, who had several times noticed this man gazing upon his child, and the scar on his cheek, and the big tears in his eyes. This man, who had so really the appearance of a man, and who wept like a woman, had attracted the warden's attention. This face remained in his memory. One day, having gone to Vernon to see his brother, he met Colonel Pontmercy on the bridge, and recognised the man of Saint Sulpice. The warden spoke of it to the curé, and the two, under some pretext, made the colonel a visit. This visit led to others. The colonel, who at first was very reserved, finally unbosomed himself, and the curé and the warden came to know the whole story, and how Pontmercy was sacrificing his own happiness to the future of his child. The result was that the curé felt a veneration and tenderness for him, and the colonel, on his part, felt an affection for the curé. And, moreover, when it happens that both are sincere and good, nothing will mix and amalgamate more easily than an old priest and an old soldier. In reality, they are the same kind of man. One has devoted himself to his country upon earth, the other to his country in heaven; there is no other difference.

Twice a year, on the first of January and on St. George's Day, Marius wrote filial letters to his father, which his aunt dictated, and which, one would have said, were copied from some Complete Letter Writer; this was all that M. Gillenormand allowed; and the father answered with very tender letters, which the grandfather thrust into his pocket without reading.

END OF THE BRIGAND

The completion of Marius' classical studies was coincident with M. Gillenormand's retirement from the world. The old man bade farewell to the Faubourg Saint Germain, and to Madame de T.'s salon, and established himself in the Marais, at his house in the Rue des Filles du Calvaire. His servants there were, in addition to the porter, the chambermaid Nicolette who had succeeded Magnon, and the short-winded and pursy Basque.

In 1827, Marius had just attained his eighteenth year. On coming in one evening, he saw his grandfather with a letter in his hand.

"Marius," said M. Gillenormand, "you will set out to-morrow for Vernon."

"What for?" said Marius.

"To see your father."

Marius shuddered. He had thought of everything but this, that a day might come, when he would have to see his father. Nothing could have been more unlooked for, more surprising, and, we must say, more disagreeable. It was aversion compelled to intimacy. It was not chagrin; no, it was pure drudgery.

Marius, besides his feelings of political antipathy, was convinced that his father, the sabrer, as M. Gillenormand called him in his gentler moments, did not love him; that was clear, since he had abandoned him and left him to others. Feeling that he was not loved at all, he had no love. Nothing more natural, said he to himself.

He was so astounded that he did not question M. Gillenormand. The grandfather continued:

"It appears that he is sick. He asks for you."

And after a moment of silence he added:

"Start to-morrow morning. I think there is at the Cour des Fontaines a conveyance which starts at six o'clock and arrives at night. Take it. He says the case is urgent."

Then he crumpled up the letter and put it in his pocket. Marius could have started that evening and been with his father the next morning. A diligence then made the trip to Rouen from the Rue du Bouloi by night passing through Vernon. Neither M. Gillenormand nor Marius thought of inquiring.

The next day at dusk, Marius arrived at Vernon. Candles were just beginning to be lighted. He asked the first person he met for *the house of Monsieur Pontmercy.* For in his feelings he agreed with the Restoration, and he, too, recognised his father neither as baron nor as colonel.

The house was pointed out to him. He rang; a woman came and opened the door with a small lamp in her hand.

"Monsieur Pontmercy?" said Marius.

The woman remained motionless.

"Is it here?" asked Marius.

The woman gave an affirmative nod of the head.

"Can I speak with him?"

The woman gave a negative sign.

"But I am his son!" resumed Marius. "He expects me."

"He expects you no longer," said the woman.

Then he perceived that she was in tears.

She pointed to the door of a low room; he entered.

In this room, which was lighted by a tallow candle on the mantel, there were three men, one of them standing, one on his knees, and one stripped to his shirt and lying at full length upon the floor. The one upon the floor was the colonel.

The two others were a physician and a priest who was praying.

The colonel had been three days before attacked with a brain fever. At the beginning of the sickness, having a presentiment of ill, he had written to Monsieur Gillenormand to ask for his son. He had grown worse. On the very evening of Marius' arrival at Vernon, the colonel had had a fit of delirium; he sprang out of his bed in spite of the servant, crying: "My son has not come! I am going to meet him!" Then he had gone out of his room and fallen upon the floor of the hall. He had but just died.

The doctor and the curé had been sent for. The doctor had come too late, the curé had come too late. The son also had come too late.

By the dim light of the candle, they could distinguish upon the cheek of the pale and prostrate colonel a big tear which had fallen from his death-stricken eye. The eye was glazed, but the tear was not dry. This tear was for his son's delay.

Marius looked upon this man, whom he saw for the first time, and for the last—this venerable and manly face, these open eyes which saw not, this white hair, these robust limbs upon which he distinguished here and there brown lines which were sabre-cuts, and a species of red stars which were bullet-holes. He looked upon that gigantic scar which imprinted heroism upon this face on which God had impressed goodness. He thought that this man was his father and that this man was dead, and he remained unmoved.

The sorrow which he experienced was the sorrow which he would have felt before any other man whom he might have seen stretched out in death.

Mourning, bitter mourning was in that room. The servant was lamenting by herself in a corner, the curé was praying, and his sobs were heard; the doctor was wiping his eyes; the corpse itself wept.

This doctor, this priest, and this woman, looked at Marius through their affliction without saying a word; it was he who was the stranger. Marius, too little moved, felt ashamed and embarrassed at his attitude; he had his hat in his hand, he let it fall to the floor, to make believe that grief deprived him of strength to hold it.

At the same time he felt something like remorse, and he despised himself for acting thus. But was it his fault? He did not love his father, indeed!

The colonel left nothing. The sale of his furniture hardly paid for his burial. The servant found a scrap of paper which she handed to Marius. It contained this, in the handwriting of the colonel:

"*For my Son.*—The emperor made me a baron upon the battle-field of Waterloo. Since the Restoration contests this title which I have bought with my blood, my son will take it and bear it. I need not say that he will be worthy of it." On the back, the colonel had added: "At this same battle of Waterloo, a sergeant saved my life. This man's name is Thénardier. Not long ago, I believe he was keeping a little tavern in a village in the suburbs of Paris, at Chelles or at Montfermeil. If my son meets him, he will do Thénardier all the service he can."

Not from duty towards his father, but on account of that vague respect for death which is always so imperious in the heart of man, Marius took this paper and pressed it.

No trace remained of the colonel. Monsieur Gillenormand had his sword and uniform sold to a second-hand dealer. The neighbours stripped the garden and carried off the rare flowers. The other plants became briery and scraggy, and died.

Marius remained only forty-eight hours at Vernon. After the burial, he returned to Paris and went back to his law, thinking no more of his father than if he had never lived. In two days the colonel had been buried, and in three days forgotten.

Marius wore crape on his hat. That was all.

THE UTILITY OF GOING TO MASS, TO BECOME REVOLUTIONARY

Marius had preserved the religious habits of his childhood. One Sunday he had gone to hear mass at Saint Sulpice, at this same chapel of the Virgin to which his aunt took him when he was a little boy, and being that day more absent-minded and dreamy than usual, he took his place behind a pillar and knelt down, without noticing it, before a Utrecht velvet chair, on the backs of which this name was written: *Monsieur Mabeuf, churchwarden.* The mass had hardly commenced when an old man presented himself and said to Marius:

"Monsieur, this is my place."

Marius moved away readily, and the old man took his chair.

After mass, Marius remained absorbed in thought a few steps distant; the old man approached him again and said: "I beg your pardon, monsieur, for having disturbed you a little while ago, and for disturbing you again now; but you must have thought me impertinent, and I must explain."

"Monsieur," said Marius, "it is unnecessary."

"Yes!" resumed the old man; "I do not wish you to have a bad opinion of me. You see I think a great deal of that place. It seems to me that the mass is better there. Why? I will tell you. To that place I have seen for ten years, regularly, every two or three months, a poor, brave father come, who had no other opportunity and no other way of seeing his child, being prevented through some family arrangements. He came at the hour when he knew his son was brought to mass. The little one never suspected that his father was here. He did not even know, perhaps, that he had a father, the innocent boy!

The father, for his part, kept behind a pillar, so that nobody should see him. He looked at his child, and wept. This poor man worshipped this little boy. I saw that. This place has become sanctified, as it were, for me, and I have acquired the habit of coming here to hear mass. I prefer it to the bench, where I have a right to be as a warden. I was even acquainted slightly with this unfortunate gentleman. He had a father-in-law, a rich aunt, relatives, I do not remember exactly, who threatened to disinherit the child if he, the father, should see him. He had sacrificed himself that his son might some day be rich and happy. They were separated by political opinions. Certainly I approve of political opinions, but there are people who do not know where to stop. Bless me! because a man was at Waterloo he is not a monster; a father is not separated from his child for that. He was one of Bonaparte's colonels. He is dead, I believe. He lived at Vernon, where my brother is curé, and his name is something like Pontmarie, or Montpercy. He had a handsome sabre cut."

"Pontmercy," said Marius, turning pale.

"Exactly; Pontmercy. Did you know him?"

"Monsieur," said Marius, "he was my father."

The old churchwarden clasped his hands, and exclaimed—

"Ah! you are the child! Yes, that is it; ought to be a man now. Well! poor child, you can say that you had a father who loved you well."

Marius offered his arm to the old man, and walked with him to his house. Next day he said to Monsieur Gillenormand:—

"We have arranged a hunting party with a few friends. Will you permit me to be absent for three days?"

"Four," answered the grandfather; "go; amuse yourself."

And with a wink he whispered to his daughter—

"Some love affair!"

WHAT IT IS TO HAVE MET A CHURCHWARDEN

Where Marius went we shall see a little further on.

Marius was absent three days, then he returned to Paris, went straight to the library of the law-school, and asked for the file of the *Moniteur*

He read the *Moniteur;* he read all the histories of the republic and the empire; the *Memorial de Sainte-Hélène;* all the memoirs, journals, bulletins, proclamations; he devoured everything. The first time he met his father's name in the bulletins of the grand army he had a fever for a whole week. He went to see the generals under whom George Pontmercy had served—among others, Count H. The church-warden, Mabeuf, whom he had gone to see again, gave him an account of the life at Vernon, the colonel's retreat, his flowers and his solitude. Marius came to understand fully this rare, sublime, and gentle man, this sort of lion-lamb who was his father.

In the meantime, engrossed in this study, which took up all his time, as well as all his thoughts, he hardly saw the Gillenormands more. At the hours of meals he appeared; then when they looked for him, he was gone. The aunt grumbled. The grandfather smiled. "Poh, poh! it is the age for the lasses!" Sometimes the old man added: "The devil! I thought that it was some gallantry. It seems to be a passion."

It was a passion, indeed. Marius was on the way to adoration for his father.

One night he was alone in his little room next the roof. His candle was lighted; he was reading, leaning on his table by the open window. All manner of reveries came over him from the expanse of space and mingled with his thought. What a spectacle is night! We hear dull sounds, not knowing whence they come; we see Jupiter, twelve hundred times larger than the earth, glistening like an ember, the welkin is black, the stars sparkle, it is terror-inspiring.

He was reading the bulletins of the Grand Army, those heroic strophes written on the battle-field; he saw there at intervals his father's name, the emperor's name everywhere; the whole of the grand empire appeared before him; he felt as if a tide were swelling and rising within him; it seemed to him at moments that his father was passing by him like a breath, and whispering in his ear; gradually he grew wandering; he thought he heard the drums, the cannon, the trumpets, the measured tread of the battalions, the dull and distant gallop of the cavalry; from time to time he lifted his eyes to the sky and saw the colossal constellations shining in the limitless abysses, then they fell back upon the book, and saw there other colossal things moving about confusedly. His heart was full. He was transported, trembling, breathless; suddenly, without himself knowing what moved him, or what he was obeying, he arose, stretched his arms out of the window, gazed fixedly into the gloom, the silence, the darkling infinite, the eternal immensity, and cried: Vive l'empereur!

When, in this mysterious labour, he had entirely cast off his old Bourbon and ultra skin, when he had shed the aristocrat, the jacobite, and the royalist, when he was fully revolutionary, thoroughly democratic, and almost republican, he went to an engraver on the Quai des Orfévres, and ordered a hundred cards bearing this name: *Baron Marius Pontmercy.*

This was but a very logical consequence of the change which had taken place in him, a change in which everything gravitated about his father.

However, as he knew nobody, and could not leave his cards at anybody's door, he put them in his pocket.

Through affection and veneration for his father, Marius had almost reached aversion for his grandfather.

Nothing of this, however, as we have said, was betrayed externally. Only he was more and more frigid; laconic at meals, and scarcely ever in the house. When his aunt scolded him for it, he was very mild, and gave as an excuse his studies, courts, examinations, dissertations, etc. The grandfather did not change his infallible diagnosis: "In love? I understand it."

Marius was absent for a while from time to time.

"Where can he go to?" asked his aunt.

On one of these journeys, which were always very short, he went to Montfermeil in obedience to the injunction which his father had left him, and sought for the former sergeant of Waterloo, the innkeeper Thénardier. Thénardier had failed, the inn was closed, and nobody knew what had become of him. While making these researches, Marius was away from the house four days.

"Decidedly," said the grandfather, "he is going astray."

They thought they noticed that he wore something, upon his breast and under his shirt, hung from his neck by a black ribbon.

SOME PETTICOAT

One morning, Mlle. Gillenormand the elder had retired to her room as much excited as her placidity allowed. Marius had asked his grandfather again for permission to make a short journey, adding that he intended to set out that evening. "Go!" the grandfather had answered, and M. Gillenormand had added aside, lifting his eyebrows to the top of his forehead: "He is getting to be an old offender."

Marius, on that evening which followed, mounted the diligence. At daybreak, the driver of the diligence shouted: "Vernon! Vernon relay! passengers for Vernon?" At this moment a pair of black pantaloons getting down from the impériale, appeared before the window of the coupé. It was Marius. A little peasant girl, beside the coach, among the horses and postillions, was offering flowers to the passengers. "Flowers for your ladies," cried she. Marius approached her and bought the most beautiful flowers in her basket. Arriving at the church, he did not go in, but went behind the building. He disappeared at the corner of one of the buttresses of the apsis. There, his face hid in his hands, he knelt in the grass, upon a grave. He had scattered his bouquet. At the end of the grave, at an elevation which marked the head, there was a black wooden cross, with this name in white letters: COLONEL BARON PONTMERCY.

MARBLE AGAINST GRANITE

It was here that Marius had come the first time that he absented himself from Paris. It was here that he returned every time that M. Gillenormand said: he sleeps out.

Marius returned from Vernon early in the morning of the third day, was set down at his grandfather's, and, fatigued by the two nights passed in the diligence, feeling the need of making up for his lack of sleep by an hour at the swimming school, ran quickly up to his room, took only time enough to lay off his travelling coat and the black ribbon which he wore about his neck, and went away to the bath.

M. Gillenormand, who had risen early like all old persons who are in good health, had heard him come in, and hastened as fast as he could with his old legs, to climb to the top of the stairs where Marius' room was, that he might embrace him, question him while embracing him, and find out something about where he came from.

But the youth had taken less time to go down than the octogenarian to go up, and when Grandfather Gillenormand entered the garret room, Marius was no longer there.

The bed was not disturbed, and upon the bed were displayed without distrust the coat and the black ribbon.

"I like that better," said M. Gillenormand.

And a moment afterwards he entered the parlour where Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder was already seated, embroidering her cab wheels.

The entrance was triumphal.

M. Gillenormand held in one hand the coat and in the other the neck ribbon, and cried:

"Victory! We are going to penetrate the mystery! we shall know the end of the end, we shall feel of the libertinism of our trickster! here we are with the romance even. I have the portrait!"

In fact, a black shagreen box, much like a medallion, was fastened to the ribbon.

The old man took this box and looked at it some time without opening it, with that air of desire, ravishment, and anger, with which a poor, hungry devil sees an excellent dinner pass under his nose, when it is not for him.

"For it is evidently a portrait. I know all about that. This is worn tenderly upon the heart. What fools they are! Some abominable quean, enough to make one shudder probably! Young folks have such bad taste in these days!"

"Let us see, father," said the old maid.

The box opened by pressing a spring. They found nothing in it but a piece of paper carefully folded.

"From the same to the same," said M. Gillenormand, bursting with laughter. "I know what that is. A love-letter!"

"Ah! then let us read it!" said the aunt.

And she put on her spectacles. They unfolded the paper and read this:

"*For my son.*—The emperor made me a baron upon the battlefield of

Waterloo. Since the restoration contests this title which I have bought with my blood, my son will take it and bear it. I need not say that he will be worthy of it."

The feelings of the father and daughter cannot be described. They felt chilled as by the breath of a death's head. They did not exchange a word. M. Gillenormand, however, said in a low voice, and as if talking to himself:

"It is the handwriting of that sabrer."

The aunt examined the paper, turned it on all sides, then put it back in the box.

Just at that moment, a little oblong package, wrapped in blue paper, fell from a pocket of the coat. Mademoiselle Gillenormand picked it up and unfolded the blue paper. It was Marius' hundred cards. She passed one of then to M. Gillenormand, who read: *Baron Marius Pontmercy.*

The old man rang. Nicolette came. M. Gillenormand took the ribbon, the box, and the coat, threw all on the floor in the middle of the parlour, and said:

"Take away those things."

A full hour passed in complete silence. The old man and the old maid sat with their backs turned to one another, and were probably, each on their side, thinking over the same things. At the end of that hour, aunt Gillenormand said:

"Pretty!"

A few minutes afterwards, Marius made his appearance. He came in. Even before crossing the threshold of the parlour, he perceived his grandfather holding one of his cards in his hand, who, on seeing him, exclaimed with his crushing air of sneering, bourgeois superiority:

"Stop! stop! stop! stop! stop! you are a baron now. I present you my compliments. What does this mean?"

Marius coloured slightly, and answered:

"It means that I am my father's son."

M. Gillenormand checked his laugh, and said harshly:

"Your father; I am your father."

"My father," resumed Marius with downcast eyes and stern manner, "was a humble and heroic man, who served the Republic and

France gloriously, who was great in the greatest history that men have ever made, who lived a quarter of a century in the camp, by day under grape and under balls, by night in the snow, in the mud, and in the rain, who captured colours, who received twenty wounds, who died forgotten and abandoned, and who had but one fault; that was in loving too dearly two ingrates, his country and me."

This was more than M. Gillenormand could listen to. At the word, *Republic,* he rose, or rather, sprang to his feet. Every one of the words which Marius had pronounced, had produced the effect upon the old royalist's face, of a blast from a bellows upon a burning coal. From dark he had become red, from red purple, and from purple glowing.

"Marius!" exclaimed he, "abominable child! I don't know what your father was! I don't want to know! I know nothing about him and I don't know him! but what I do know is, that there was never anything but miserable wretches among all that rabble! that they were all beggars, assassins, red caps, thieves! I say all! I say all! I know nobody! I say all! do you hear, Marius? Look you, indeed, you are as much a baron as my slipper! they were all bandits who served Robespierre! all brigands who served B-u-o-naparte! all traitors who betrayed, betrayed, betrayed! their legitimate king! all cowards who ran from the Prussians and English at Waterloo! That is what I know. If your father is among them I don't know him, I am sorry for it, so much the worse, your servant!"

In his turn, Marius now became the coal, and M. Gillenormand the bellows. Marius shuddered in every limb, he knew not what to do, his head burned. He was the priest who sees all his wafers thrown to the winds, the fakir who sees a passer-by spit upon his idol. He could not allow such things to be said before him unanswered. But what could he do? His father had been trodden under foot and stamped upon in his presence, but by whom? by his grandfather. How should he avenge the one without outraging the other? It was impossible for him to insult his grandfather, and it was equally impossible for him not to avenge his father. On one hand a sacred tomb, on the other white hairs. He was for a few moments dizzy and staggering with all this whirlwind in his head; then he raised his eyes, looked straight at his grandfather, and cried in a thundering voice:

"Down with the Bourbons, and that great hog Louis XVIII.!"

Louis XVIII. had been dead for four years; but it was all the same to him.

The old man, scarlet as he was, suddenly became whiter than his hair. He turned towards a bust of the Duke de Berry which stood upon the mantle, and bowed to it profoundly with a sort of peculiar majesty. Then he walked twice, slowly and in silence, from the fireplace to the window and from the window to the fireplace, traversing the whole length of the room and making the floor crack as if an image of stone were walking over it. The second time, he bent towards his daughter, who was enduring the shock with the stupor of an aged sheep, and said to her with a smile that was almost calm:

"A baron like Monsieur and a bourgeois like me cannot remain under the same roof."

And all at once straightening up, pallid, trembling, terrible, his forehead swelling with the fearful radiance of anger, he stretched his arm towards Marius and cried to him:

"Be off."

Marius left the house.

The next day, M. Gillenormand said to his daughter:

"You will send sixty pistoles every six months to this blood-drinker, and never speak of him to me again."

Having an immense residuum of fury to expend, and not knowing what to do with it, he spoke to his daughter with coldness for more than three months.

Marius, for his part, departed in indignation. A circumstance, which we must mention, had aggravated his exasperation still more. There are always such little fatalities complicating domestic dramas. Feelings are embittered by them, although in reality the faults are none the greater. In hurriedly carrying away, at the old man's command, Marius' "things" to his room, Nicolette had, without perceiving it, dropped, probably on the garret stairs, which were dark, the black shagreen medallion which contained the paper written by the colonel. Neither the paper nor the medallion could be found. Marius was convinced that "Monsieur Gillenormand"—from that day forth he never named him othewise—had thrown "his father's will" into the fire. He knew by heart the few lines written by the colonel, and consequently nothing was lost. But the paper, the writing, that sacred relic, all that was his heart itself. What had been done with it?

Marius went away without saying where he was going, and without knowing where he was going, with thirty francs, his watch, and a few clothes in a carpet bag. He hired a cabriolet by the hour, jumped in, and drove at random towards the Latin quarter.

What was Marius to do?

BOOK IV—THE FRIENDS OF THE A B C

A GROUP WHICH ALMOST BECAME HISTORIC

At that period, apparently indifferent, something of a revolutionary thrill was vaguely felt. Whispers coming from the depths of '89 and of '92 were in the air. Young Paris was, excuse the expression, in the process of moulting. People were transformed almost without suspecting it, by the very movement of the time. The hand which moves over the dial moves also among souls. Each one took the step forward which was before him. Royalists became liberals, liberals became democrats.

It was like a rising tide, complicated by a thousand ebbs; the peculiarity of the ebb is to make mixtures; thence very singular combinations of ideas; men worshipped at the same time Napoleon and liberty. We are now writing history. These were the mirages of that day. Opinions pass through phases. Voltairian royalism, a grotesque variety, had a fellow not less strange, Bonapartist liberalism.

Other groups of minds were more serious. They fathomed principle; they attached themselves to right. They longed for the absolute, they caught glimpses of the infinite realisations; the absolute, by its very rigidity, pushes the mind towards the boundless, and makes it float in the illimitable. There is nothing like dream to create the future. Utopia to-day, flesh and blood to-morrow.

Advanced opinions had double foundations. The appearance of mystery threatened "the established orders of things," which was sullen and suspicious—a sign in the highest degree revolutionary. The reservations of power meet the reservations of the people in the sap.

The incubation of insurrections replies to the plotting of *coups d'etat*.

At that time there were not yet in France any of those underlying organisations like the German Tugendbund and the Italian Carbonari; but here and there obscure excavations were branching out. La Cougourde was assuming form at Aix; there was in Paris, among other affiliations of this kind, the Society of the Friends of the A B C.

Who were the Friends of the A B C? A society having as its aim, in appearance, the education of children; in reality, the elevation of men.

They declared themselves the Friends of the A B C.[1] The *abaissé* [the abased] were the people. They wished to raise them up. A pun at which you should not laugh.

The Friends of the A B C were not numerous, it was a secret society in the embryonic state; we should almost say a coterie, if coteries produced heroes. They met in Paris, at two places, near the Halles, in a wine shop called *Corinthe,* which will be referred to hereafter, and near the Pantheon, in a little coffee-house on the Place Saint Michel, called *Le Café Musain,* now torn down; the first of these two places of rendezvous was near the working-men, the second near the students.

The ordinary conventicles of the Friends of the A B C were held in a back room of the Café Musain.

This room, quite distant from the café, with which it communicated by a very long passage, had two windows, and an exit by a private stairway upon the little Rue des Grès. They smoked, drank, played, and laughed there. They talked very loud about everything, and in whispers about something else. On the wall was nailed, an indication sufficient to awaken the suspicion of a police officer, an old map of France under the republic.

Most of the Friends of the A B C were students, in thorough understanding with a few working-men. The names of the principal are as follows. They belong to a certain extent to history: Enjolras, Combeferre, Jean Prouvaire, Feuilly, Courfeyrac, Bahorel, Lesgle or Laigle, Joly, Grataire.

These young men constituted a sort of family among themselves, by force of friendship. All except Laigle were from the South.

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[1] *A B C* in French, is pronounced ah-bay-say, exactly like the French word, ***abaissé***.

This was a remarkable group. Enjolras, whom we have named first, was an only son and was rich. Besides Enjolras who represented the logic of the revolution, Combeferre represented its philosophy. Between the logic of the revolution and its philosophy, there is this difference—that its logic could conclude with war, while its philosophy could only end in peace. Combeferre completed and corrected Enjolras. He was lower and broader. His desire was to instil into all minds the broad principles of general ideas; he said: "Revolution, but civilisation;" and about the steep mountain he spread the vast blue horizon. Hence, in all Combeferre's views, there was something attainable and practicable. Jean Prouvaire was yet a shade more subdued than Combeferre. Feuilly was a fan-maker, an orphan, who with difficulty earned three francs a day, and who had but one thought, to deliver the world. Courfeyrac had a father whose name was M. Courfeyrac. One of the false ideas of the restoration in point of aristocracy and nobility was its faith in the particle.

Enjolras was the chief, Combeferre was the guide, Courfeyrac was the centre. The others gave more light, he gave more heat; the truth is, that he had all the qualities of a centre, roundness and radiance. Bahorel had figured in the bloody tumult of June, 1822, on the occasion of the burial of young Lallemand. The bald member of the club was son of Lesgle, or Lègle, and signed his name Lègle (de Meaux). His comrades, for the sake of brevity, called him Bossuet. Bossuet was slowly making his way towards the legal profession; he was doing his law, in the manner of Bahorel. Bossuet had never much domicile, sometimes none at all. He lodged sometimes with one, sometimes with another, oftenest with Joly. Joly was studying medicine. He was two years younger than Bossuet.

All these young men, diverse as they were, and of whom, as a whole, we ought only to speak seriously, had the same religion: Progress. All were legitimate sons of the French Revolution.

Among all these passionate hearts and all these undoubting minds there was one sceptic. How did he happen to be there? from juxtaposition. The name of this sceptic was Grantaire, and he usually signed with this rebus: R (grand R, great R).

All these words; rights of the people, rights of man, social contract, French Revolution, republic, democracy, humanity, civilisation, religion, progress, were to Grantaire, very nearly meaningless. He smiled at them. Scepticism, that caries of the intellect, had not left one entire idea in his mind. He lived in irony. This was his axiom: There is only one certainty, my full glass.

Still, this sceptic had a fanaticism. This fanaticism was neither an idea, nor a dogma, nor an art, nor a science; it was a man: Enjolras. Grantaire admired, loved, and venerated Enjolras. To whom did this anarchical doubter ally himself in this phalanx of absolute minds? To the most absolute. In what way did Enjolras subjugate him? By ideas? No. By character. A phenomenon often seen. A sceptic adhering to a believer; that is as simple as the law of the complementary colours. What we lack attracts us. Nobody loves the light like the blind man. Grantaire, a true satellite of Enjolras, lived in this circle of young people; he dwelt in it; he took pleasure only in it; he followed them everywhere. His delight was to see these forms coming and going in the fumes of the wine. He was tolerated for his good-humour. Enjolras, being a believer, disdained this sceptic, and being sober, scorned this drunkard. He granted him a little haughty pity. Grantaire was an unaccepted Pylades. Always rudely treated by Enjolras, harshly repelled, rejected, yet returning, he said of Enjolras: "What a fine statute!" It was among these men that Marius lived in Paris, having installed himself in a room at the Hotel de la Porte Sainte Jacques, side by side with Courfeyrac.

THE ASTONISHMENTS OF MARIUS

One morning, Courfeyrac abruptly put this question to Marius.

"By the way, have you any political opinions?"

"What do you mean?" said Marius, almost offended at the question.

"What are you?"

"Bonapartist democrat."

"Grey shade of quiet mouse colour," said Courfeyrac.

The next day, Courfeyrac introduced Marius to the Café Musain. Then he whispered in his ear with a smile: "I must give you your admission into the revolution." And he took him into the room of the Friends of the A B C. He presented him to the other members, saying in an undertone this simple word which Marius did not understand: "A pupil."

Marius had fallen into a mental wasps' nest. Still, although silent and serious, he was not the less winged, nor the less armed.

Marius, up to this time solitary and inclined to soliloquy and privacy by habit and by taste, was a little bewildered at this flock of young men about him. All these different progressives attacked him at once, and perplexed him. The tumultuous sweep and sway of all these minds at liberty and at work set his ideas in a whirl. Sometimes, in the confusion, they went so far from him that he had some difficulty in finding them again. He heard talk of philosophy, of literature, of art, of history, of religion, in a style he had not looked for. He caught glimpses of strange appearances; and, as he did not bring them into perspective, he was not sure that it was not a chaos that he saw. On abandoning his grandfather's opinions for his father's, he had thought himself settled; he now suspected, with anxiety, and without daring to confess it to himself, that he was not. The angle under which he saw all things was beginning to change anew. A certain oscillation shook the whole horizon of his brain. A strange internal moving-day. He almost suffered from it.

It seemed that there were to these young men no "sacred things." Marius heard, upon every subject, a singular language annoying to his still timid mind.

In this trouble in which his mind was plunged he scarcely gave a thought to certain serious phases of existence. The realities of life do not allow themselves to be forgotten. They came and jogged his memory sharply.

One morning, the keeper of the house entered Marius' room, and said to him:

"I am in need of money."

"Ask Courfeyrac to come and speak with me," said Marius.

Courfeyrac came; the host left them. Marius related to him what he had not thought of telling him before, that he was, so to speak, alone in the world, without any relatives.

"What are you going to become?" said Courfeyrac.

"I have no idea," answered Marius.

"What are you going to do?

"I have no idea."

"Have you any money?"

"Fifteen francs."

"Do you wish me to lend you some?"

"Never."

"Have you any clothes?"

"What you see."

"Have you any jewellery?"

"A watch."

"A silver one?"

"Gold, here it is."

"I know a dealer in clothing who will take your overcoat and one pair of trousers."

"That is good."

"You will then have but one pair of trousers, one waistcoat, one hat, and one coat."

"And my boots."

"What? you will not go barefoot? what opulence!"

"That will be enough."

"I know a watchmaker who will buy your watch."

"That is good."

"No, it is not good. What will you do afterwards?"

"What I must. Anything honourable at least."

"Do you know English?"

"No."

"Do you know German?"

"No."

"That is bad."

"Why?"

"Because a friend of mine, a bookseller, is making a sort of encyclopædia, for which you could have translated German or English articles. It is poor pay, but it gives a living."

"I will learn English and German."

"And in the meantime?"

"In the meantime I will eat my coats and my watch."

The clothes dealer was sent for. He gave twenty francs for the clothes. They went to the watchmaker. He gave forty-five francs for the watch.

"That is not bad," said Marius to Courfeyrac, on returning to the house; "with my fifteen francs, this makes eighty francs."

"The hotel bill?" observed Courfeyrac.

"Ah! I forgot," said Marius.

The host presented his bill, which must be paid on the spot. It amounted to seventy francs.

"I have ten francs left," said Marius.

"The devil," said Courfeyrac, "you will have five francs to eat while you are learning English, and five francs while you are learning German. That will be swallowing a language very rapidly or a hundred-sous piece very slowly."

Meanwhile Aunt Gillenormand, who was really a kind person on sad occasions, had finally unearthed Marius' lodgings.

One morning when Marius came home from the school, he found a letter from his aunt, and the *sixty pistoles,* that is to say, six hundred francs in gold, in a sealed box.

Marius sent the thirty louis back to his aunt, with a respectful letter, in which he told her that he had the means of living, and that he could provide henceforth for all his necessities. At that time he had three francs left.

The aunt did not inform the grandfather of this refusal, lest she should exasperate him. Indeed, had he not said: "Let nobody ever speak to me of this blood-drinker?"

Marius left the Porte Sainte Jacques Hotel, unwilling to contract debt.

BOOK V—THE EXCELLENCE OF MISFORTUNE

MARIUS NEEDY

Life became stern to Marius. To eat his coats and his watch was nothing. He chewed that inexpressible thing which is called *the cud of bitterness.* A horrible thing, which includes days without bread, nights without sleep, evenings without a candle, a hearth without a fire, weeks without labour, a future without hope, a coat out at the elbows, an old hat which makes young girls laugh, the door found shut against you at night because you have not paid your rent, the insolence of the porter and the landlord, the jibes of neighbours, humiliations, self-respect outraged, any drudgery acceptable, disgust, bitterness, prostration—Marius learned how one swallows down all these things, and how they are often the only things that one has to swallow. At that period of existence, when man has need of pride, because he has need of love, he felt that he was mocked at because he was badly dressed, and ridiculed because he was poor. At the age when youth swells the heart with an imperial pride, he more than once dropped his eyes upon his worn-out boots, and experienced the undeserved shame and the poignant blushes of misery. Wonderful and terrible trial, from which the feeble come out infamous, from which the strong come out sublime. Crucible into which destiny casts a man whenever she desires a scoundrel or a demi-god.

For there are many great deeds done in the small struggles of life. There is a determined though unseen bravery, which defends itself foot to foot in the darkness against the fatal invasions of necessity and of baseness. Noble and mysterious triumphs which no eye sees, which no renown rewards, which no flourish of triumph salutes. Life, misfortune, isolation, abandonment, poverty, are battle-fields which have their heroes; obscure heroes, sometimes greater than the illustrious heroes.

There was a period in Marius' life when he swept his own hall, when he bought a pennyworth of Brie cheese at the market-woman's, when he waited for nightfall to make his way to the baker's and buy a loaf of bread, which he carried furtively to his garret, as if he had stolen it. Sometimes there was seen to glide into the corner meat-market, in the midst of the jeering cooks who elbowed him, an awkward young man, with books under his arm, who had a timid and frightened appearance, and who, as he entered, took off his hat from his forehead, which was dripping with sweat, made a low bow to the astonished butcher, another bow to the butcher's boy, asked for a mutton cutlet, paid six or seven sous for it, wrapped it up in paper, put it under his arm between two books, and went away. It was Marius. On this cutlet, which he cooked himself, he lived three days.

The first day he ate the meat; the second day he ate the fat; the third day he gnawed the bone. On several occasions, Aunt Gillenormand made overtures, and sent him the sixty pistoles. Marius always sent them back, saying that he had no need of anything.

He was still in mourning for his father, he had never left off black clothes. His clothes left him, however. A day came, at last, when he had no coat. His trousers were going also. What was to be done? Courfeyrac, for whom he also had done some good turns, gave him an old coat. For thirty sous, Marius had it turned by some porter or other, and it was a new coat. But this coat was green. Then Marius did not go out till after nightfall. That made his coat black. Desiring always to be in mourning, he clothed himself with night.

Through all this, he procured admission to the bar. He was reputed to occupy Courfeyrac's room, which was decent, and where a certain number of law books, supported and filled out by some odd volumes of novels, made up the library required by the rules.

When Marius had become a lawyer, he informed his grandfather of it, in a letter which was frigid, but full of submission and respect. M. Gillenormand took the letter with trembling hands, read it, and threw it, torn in pieces, into the basket. Two or three days afterwards, Mademoiselle Gillenormand overheard her father, who was alone in his room, talking aloud. This was always the case when he was much excited. She listened: the old man said: "If you were not a fool, you would know that a man cannot be a baron and a lawyer at the same time."

MARIUS POOR

It is with misery as with everything else. It gradually becomes endurable. It ends by taking form and becoming fixed. You vegetate, that is to say, you develop in some wretched fashion, but sufficient for existence. This is the way in which Marius Pontmercy's life was arranged.

He had got out of the narrowest place; the pass widened a little before him. By dint of hard work, courage, perseverance, and will, he had succeeded in earning by his labour about seven hundred francs a year. He had learned German and English; thanks to Courfeyrac, who introduced him to his friend the publisher, Marius filled, in the literary department of the bookhouse, the useful role of *utility*. He made out prospectuses, translated from the journals, annotated republications, compiled biographies, etc., net result, year in and year out, seven hundred francs. He lived on this. How? Not badly. We are going to tell.

Marius occupied, at an annual rent of thirty francs, a wretched little room in the Gorbeau tenement, with no fireplace, called a cabinet, in which there was no more furniture than was indispensable. The furniture was his own. He gave three francs a month to the old woman who had charge of the building, for sweeping his room and bringing him every morning a little warm water, a fresh egg, and a penny loaf of bread. On this loaf and this egg he breakfasted. His breakfast varied from two or four sous, as eggs were cheap or dear. At six o'clock in the evening he went down into the Rue Saint Jacques, to dine at Rousseau's, opposite Basset's, the print dealer's, at the corner of the Rue des Mathurins. He ate no soup. He took a sixpenny plate of meat, a threepenny half-plate of vegetables, and a threepenny dessert. For three sous, as much bread as he liked. As for wine, he drank water. On paying at the counter, where Madame Rousseau was seated majestically, still plump and fresh also in those days, he gave a sou to the waiter, and Madame Rousseau gave him a smile. Then he went away. For sixteen sous, he had a smile and a dinner.

This Rousseau restaurant, where so few bottles and so many pitchers were emptied, was rather an appeasant than a restorant. It is not kept now. The master had a fine title; he was called Rousseau the Aquatic.

Thus, breakfast four sous, dinner sixteen sous, his food cost him twenty sous a day, which was three hundred and sixty-five francs a year. Add the thirty francs for his lodging, and the thirty-six francs to the old woman, and a few other trifling expenses, and for four hundred and fifty francs, Marius was fed, lodged, and waited upon. His clothes cost him a hundred francs, his linen fifty francs, his washing fifty francs; the whole did not exceed six hundred and fifty francs. This left him fifty francs. He was rich. He occasionally lent ten francs to a friend. Courfeyrac borrowed sixty francs of him once. As for fire, having no fireplace, Marius had "simplified" it.

Marius always had two complete suits, one old "for every day," the other quite new, for special occasions. Both were black. He had but three shirts, one he had on, another in the drawer, the third at the washerwoman's. He renewed them as they wore out. They were usually ragged, so he buttoned his coat to his chin.

For Marius to arrive at this flourishing condition had required years. Hard years, and difficult ones; those to get through, these to climb. Marius had never given up for a single day. He had undergone everything, in the shape of privation; he had done everything, except get into debt. He gave himself this credit, that he had never owed a sou to anybody. For him a debt was the beginning of slavery. He felt even that a creditor is worse than a master; for a master owns only your person, a creditor owns your dignity and can belabour that. Rather than borrow, he did not eat. He had had many days of fasting. Feeling that all extremes meet, and that if we do not take care, abasement of fortune may lead to baseness of soul, he watched jealously over his pride. Such a habit or such a carriage as, in any other condition, would have appeared deferential, seemed humiliating, and he braced himself against it. He risked nothing, not wishing to take a backward step. He had a kind of stern blush upon his face. He was timid even to rudeness.

In all his trials he felt encouraged and sometimes even upborne by a secret force within. The soul helps the body, and at certain moments uplifts it. It is the only bird which sustains its cage.

By the side of his father's name, another name was engraven upon Marius' heart, the name of Thénardier. Marius, in his enthusiastic yet serious nature, surrounded with a sort of halo the man to whom, as he thought, he owed his father's life, that brave sergeant who had saved the colonel in the midst of the balls and bullets of Waterloo. He never separated the memory of this man from the memory of his father, and he associated them in his veneration. It was a sort of worship with two steps, the high altar for the colonel, the low one for Thénardier. "What," thought he, "when my father lay dying on the field of battle, Thénardier could find him through the smoke and the grape, and bring him off on his shoulders, and yet he owed him nothing; while I, who owe so much to Thénardier, I cannot reach him. Oh! I will find him!" Indeed, to find Thénardier, Marius would have given one of his arms, and all his blood. To see Thénardier, to render some service to Thénardier, to say to him— "You do not know me, but I do know you. Here I am, dispose of me!" This was the sweetest and most magnificent dream of Marius.

MARIUS A MAN

Marius was now twenty years old. It was three years since he had left his grandfather. They remained on the same terms on both sides, without attempting a reconciliation, and without seeking to meet. And, indeed, what was the use of meeting? to come in conflict? Which would have had the best of it? Marius was a vase of brass, but M. Gillenormand was an iron pot.

To tell the truth, Marius was mistaken as to his grandfather's heart. He imagined that M. Gillenormand had never loved him, and that this crusty and harsh yet smiling old man, who swore, screamed, stormed, and lifted his cane, felt for him at most only the affection, at once slight and severe, of the old men of comedy. Marius was deceived. There are fathers who do not love their children; there is no grandfather who does not adore his grandson. In reality, we have said, M. Gillenormand worshipped Marius. He worshipped him in his own way, with an accompaniment of cuffs, and even of blows; but, when the child was gone, he felt a dark void in his heart; he ordered that nobody should speak of him again, and regretted that he was so well obeyed. Sometimes it happened that some blundering, officious body would speak to him of Marius, and ask: "What is your grandson doing, or what has become of him?" The old bourgeois would answer, with a sigh, if he was too sad, or giving his ruffle a tap, if he wished to seem gay: "Monsieur the Baron Pontmercy is pettifogging in some hole."

While the old man was regretting, Marius was rejoicing. As with all good hearts, suffering had taken away his bitterness. He thought of M. Gillenormand only with kindness, but he had determined to receive nothing more from the man *who had been cruel to his father.* This was now the softened translation of his first indignation. Moreover, he was happy in having suffered, and in suffering still. It was for his father. His hard life satisfied him, and pleased him. He said to himself with a sort of pleasure that—*it was the very least;* that it was—an expiation; that—save for this, he would have been punished otherwise and later, for his unnatural indifference towards his father, and towards such a father;—that it would not have been just that his father should have had all the suffering, and himself none;—what were his efforts and his privation, moreover, compared with the heroic life of the colonel? that finally his only way of drawing near his father, and becoming like him, was to be valiant against indigence as he had been brave against the enemy; and that this was doubtless what the colonel meant by the words: *"He will be worthy of it."* Words which Marius continued to bear, not upon his breast, the colonel's paper having disappeared, but in his heart.

Meantime, although he was a lawyer, and whatever Grandfather Gillenormand might think, he was not pleading, he was not even pettifogging. Reverie had turned him away from the law. To consort with attorneys, to attend courts, to hunt up cases, was wearisome. Why should he do it? He saw no reason for changing his business. This cheap and obscure book-making had produced him sure work, work with little labour, which was sufficient for him.

Marius' life was solitary. From his taste for remaining outside of everything, and also from having been startled by its excesses, he had decided not to enter the group presided over by Enjolras. They had remained good friends; they were ready to help one another, if need were, in all possible ways; but nothing more. Marius had two friends, one young, Courfeyrac, and one old, M. Mabeuf. He inclined towards the old one. First he was indebted to him for the revolution through which he had gone; he was indebted to him for having known and loved his father. *"He operated upon me for the cataract,"* said he.

Certainly, this churchwarden had been decisive.

M. Mabeuf was not, however, on that occasion anything more than the calm and passive agent of providence. He had enlightened Marius accidentally and without knowing it, as a candle does which somebody carries; he had been the candle and not the somebody.

As to the interior political revolution in Marius, M. Mabeuf was entirely incapable of comprehending it, desiring it, or directing it.

POVERTY A GOOD NEIGHBOUR OF MISERY

Marius had a liking for this open-hearted old man, who saw that he was being slowly seized by indigence, and who had come gradually to be astonished at it, without, however, as yet becoming sad. Marius met Courfeyrac, and went to see Monsieur Mabeuf. Very rarely, however; once or twice a month, at most.

It was Marius' delight to take long walks alone on the outer boulevards, or in the Champ de Mars, or in the less frequented walks of the Luxembourg. He sometimes spent half a day in looking at a vegetable garden, at the beds of salad, the fowls on the dung-heap, and the horse turning the wheel of the pump. The passers-by looked at him with surprise, and some thought that he had a suspicious appearance and an ill-omened manner. He was only a poor young man, dreaming without an object.

It was in one of these walks that he had discovered the Gorbeau tenement, and its isolation and cheapness being an attraction to him, he had taken a room in it. He was only known in it by the name of Monsieur Marius.

Towards the middle of this year, 1831, the old woman who waited upon Marius told him that his neighbours, the wretched Jondrette family, were to be turned into the street. Marius, who passed almost all his days out of doors, hardly knew that he had any neighbours.

"Why are they turned out?" said he.

"Because they do not pay their rent; they owe for two terms."

"How much is that?"

"Twenty francs," said the old woman.

Marius had thirty francs in reserve in a drawer.

"Here," said he, to the old woman, "there are twenty-five francs. Pay for these poor people, give them five francs, and do not tell them that it is from me."

BOOK VI—THE CONJUNCTION OF TWO STARS

THE NICKNAME: MODE OF FORMATION OF FAMILY NAMES

Marius was now a fine-looking young man, of medium height, with heavy jet black hair, a high intelligent brow, large and passionate nostrils, a frank and calm expression, and an indescribable something beaming from every feature, which was at once lofty, thoughtful, and innocent. His profile, all the lines of which were rounded, but without loss of strength, possessed that Germanic gentleness which has made its way into French physiognomy through Alsace and Lorraine, and that entire absence of angles which rendered the Sicambri so recognisable among the Romans, and which distinguishes the leonine from the aquiline race. He was at that season of life at which the mind of men who think, is made up in nearly equal proportions of depth and simplicity. In a difficult situation he possessed all the essentials of stupidity; another turn of the screw, and he could become sublime. His manners were reserved, cold, polished, far from free. But as his mouth was very pleasant, his lips the reddest and his teeth the whitest in the world, his smile corrected the severity of his physiognomy. At certain moments there was a strange contrast between this chaste brow and this voluptuous smile. His eye was small, his look great.

At the time of his most wretched poverty, he noticed that girls turned when he passed, and with a deathly feeling in his heart he fled or hid himself. He thought they looked at him on account of his old clothes, and that they were laughing at him; the truth is, that they looked at him because of his graceful appearance, and that they dreamed over it.

For more than a year Marius had noticed in a retired walk of the Luxembourg, the walk which borders the parapet of the Pépinière, a man and a girl quite young, nearly always sitting side by side, on the same seat, at the most retired end of the walk, near the Rue de l'Ouest. Whenever that chance which controls the promenades of men whose eye is turned within, led Marius to this walk, and it was almost every day, he found this couple there. The man might be sixty years old; he seemed sad and serious; his whole person presented the robust but wearied appearance of a soldier retired from active service. Had he worn a decoration, Marius would have said: it is an old officer. His expression was kind, but it did not invite approach, and he never returned a look. He wore a blue coat and pantaloons, and a broad-brimmed hat, which always appeared to be new; a black cravat, and Quaker linen, that is to say, brilliantly white, but of coarse texture.

The first time the young girl that accompanied him sat down on the seat which they seemed to have adopted, she looked like a girl of about thirteen or fourteen, puny to the extent of being almost ugly, awkward, insignificant, yet promising, perhaps to have rather fine eyes. But they were always looking about with a disagreeable assurance. She wore the dress, at once aged and childish, peculiar to the convent school-girl, an ill-fitting garment of coarse black merino. They appeared to be father and daughter.

For two or three days Marius scrutinised this old man, who was not yet an aged man, and this little girl, not yet a woman; then he paid no more attention to them. For their part they did not even seem to see him. They talked with each other peacefully, and with indifference to all else. The girl chatted incessantly and gaily. The old man spoke little, and at times looked upon her with an unutterable expression of fatherliness.

Marius had acquired a sort of mechanical habit of promenading on this walk. He always found them there.

It was usually thus:

Marius would generally reach the walk at the end opposite their seat, promenade the whole length of it, passing before them, then return to the end by which he entered, and so on. He performed this turn five or six times in his promenade, and this promenade five or six times a week, but they and he had never come to exchange bows. This man and this young girl, though they appeared, and perhaps because they appeared, to avoid observation, had naturally excited the attention of the five or six students, who, from time to time, took their promenades along the Pépinière; the studious after their lecture, the others after their game of billiards. Courfeyrac, who belonged to the latter, had noticed them at some time or other, but finding the girl homely, had very quickly and carefully avoided them. He had fled like a Parthian, launching a nickname behind him. Struck especially by the dress of the little girl and the hair of the old man, he had named the daughter *Mademoiselle Lanoire* [*Black*] and the father *Monsieur Leblanc* [*White*]; and so, as nobody knew them otherwise, in the absence of a name, this surname had become fixed. The students said: "Ah! Monsieur Leblanc is at his seat!" and Marius, like the rest, had found it convenient to call this unknown gentleman M. Leblanc.

We shall do as they did, and say M. Leblanc for the convenience of this story.

Marius saw them thus nearly every day at the same hour during the first year. He found the man very much to his liking, but the girl rather disagreeable.

LUX FACTA EST

The second year, at the precise point of this history to which the reader has arrived, it so happened that Marius broke off this habit of going to the Luxembourg, without really knowing why himself, and there were nearly six months during which he did not set foot in his walk. At last he went back there again one day; it was a serene summer morning, Marius was as happy as one always is when the weather is fine. It seemed to him as if he had in his heart all the bird songs which he heard, and all the bits of blue sky which he saw through the trees.

He went straight to "his walk," and as soon as he reached it, he saw, still on the same seat, this well known pair. When he came near them, however, he saw that it was indeed the same man, but it seemed to him that it was no longer the same girl. The woman whom he now saw was a noble, beautiful creature, with all the most bewitching outlines of woman, at the precise moment at which they are yet combined with all the most charming graces of childhood,—that pure and fleeting moment which can only be translated by these two words: sweet fifteen. Beautiful chestnut hair, shaded with veins of gold, a brow which seemed chiselled marble, cheeks which seemed made of roses, a pale incarnadine, a flushed whiteness, an exquisite mouth, whence came a smile like a gleam of sunshine, and a voice like music, a head which Raphael would have given to Mary, on a neck which Jean Goujon would have given to Venus. And that nothing might be wanting to this ravishing form, the nose was not beautiful, it was pretty; neither straight nor curved, neither Italian nor Greek; it was the Parisian nose; that is, something sprightly, fine, irregular, and pure, the despair of painters and the charm of poets.

When Marius passed near her, he could not see her eyes, which were always cast down. He saw only her long chestnut lashes, eloquent of mystery and modesty.

But that did not prevent the beautiful girl from smiling as she listened to the white-haired man who was speaking to her, and nothing was so transporting as this maidenly smile with these downcast eyes.

At the first instant Marius thought it was another daughter of the same man, a sister doubtless of her whom he had seen before. But when the invariable habit of his promenade led him for the second time near the seat, and he had looked at her attentively, he recognised that she was the same. In six months the little girl had become a young woman; that was all. Nothing is more frequent than this phenomenon. There is a moment when girls bloom out in a twinkling, and become roses all at once. Yesterday we left them children, to-day we find them dangerous.

She had not only grown; she had become idealised. As three April days are enough for certain trees to put on a covering of flowers, so six months had been enough for her to put on a mantle of beauty.

And then she was no longer the school-girl with her plush hat, her merino dress, her shapeless shoes, and her red hands; taste had come to her with beauty. She was a woman well dressed, with a sort of simple and rich elegance without any particular style. She wore a dress of black damask, a mantle of the same, and a white crape hat. Her white gloves showed the delicacy of her hand which played with the Chinese ivory handle of her parasol, and her silk boot betrayed the smallness of her foot. When you passed near her, her whole toilet exhaled the penetrating fragrance of youth.

As to the man, he was still the same.

The second time that Marius came near her, the young girl raised her eyes; they were of a deep celestial blue, but in this veiled azure was nothing yet beyond the look of a child. She looked at Marius with indifference, as she would have looked at any little monkey playing under the sycamores, or the marble vase which cast its shadow over the bench; and Marius also continued his promenade thinking of something else.

He passed four or five times more by the seat where the young girl was, without even turning his eyes towards her.

On the following days he came as usual to the Luxembourg, as usual he found "the father and daughter" there, but he paid no attention to them. He thought no more of this girl now that she was handsome than he had thought of her when she was homely. He passed very near the bench on which she sat, because that was his habit.

EFFECT OF SPRING

One day the air was mild, the Luxembourg was flooded with sunshine and shadow, the sky was as clear as if the angels had washed it in the morning, the sparrows were twittering in the depths of the chestnut trees, Marius had opened his whole soul to nature, he was thinking of nothing, he was living and breathing, he passed near this seat, the young girl raised her eyes, their glances met.

But what was there now in the glance of the young girl? Marius could not have told. There was nothing, and there was everything. It was a strange flash.

She cast down her eyes, and he continued on his way.

At night, on retiring to his garret, Marius cast a look upon his dress, and for the first time perceived that he had the slovenliness, the indecency, and the unheard-of stupidity, to promenade in the Luxembourg with his "every day" suit, a hat broken near the band, coarse teamsters' boots, black pantaloons shiny at the knees, and a black coat threadbare at the elbows.

COMMENCEMENT OF A GREAT DISTEMPER

The next day, at the usual hour, Marius took from his closet his new coat, his new pantaloons, his new hat, and his new boots; he dressed himself in this panoply complete, put on his gloves, prodigious prodigality, and went to the Luxembourg.

When he entered the walk he saw M. Leblanc and the young girl at the other end "on their seat.' He buttoned his coat, stretched it down that there might be no wrinkles, noticed with some complaisance the lustre of his pantaloons, and marched upon the seat. There was something of attack in this march, and certainly a desire of conquest. I say, then, he marched upon the seat, as I would say: Hannibal marched upon Rome.

As he drew nearer, his step became slower and slower. At some distance from the seat, long before he had reached the end of the walk, he stopped, and he did not himself know how it happened, but he turned back. He did not even say to himself that he would not go to the end. It was doubtful if the young girl could see him so far off, and notice his fine appearance in his new suit. However, he held himself very straight, so that he might look well, in case anybody who was behind should happen to notice him.

He reached the opposite end and then returned, and this time he approached a little nearer to the seat. He even came to within about three trees of it, but there he felt an indescribable lack of power to go further, and he hesitated. He thought he had seen the young girl's face bent towards him. Still he made a great and manly effort, conquered his hesitation, and continued his advance. In a few seconds, he was passing before the seat, erect and firm, blushing to his ears, without daring to cast a look to the right or the left, and with his hand in his coat like a statesman. At the moment he passed under the guns of the fortress, he felt a frightful palpitation of the heart. She wore, as on the previous day, her damask dress and her crape hat. He heard the sound of an ineffable voice, which might be "her voice." She was talking quietly. She was very pretty. He felt it, though he made no effort to see her.

He passed the seat, went to the end of the walk, which was quite near, then turned and passed again before the beautiful girl. This time he was very pale. Indeed, he was experiencing nothing that was not very disagreeable. He walked away from the seat and from the young girl, and although his back was turned, he imagined that she was looking at him, and that made him stumble.

He made no effort to approach the seat again, he stopped midway of the walk, and sat down there—a thing which he never did—casting many side glances, and thinking, in the most indistinct depths of his mind, that after all it must be difficult for persons whose white hat and black dress he admired, to be absolutely insensible to his glossy pantaloons and his new coat.

At the end of a quarter of an hour, he rose, as if to recommence his walk towards this seat, which was encircled by a halo. He, however, stood silent and motionless. For the first time in fifteen months, he said to himself, that this gentleman, who sat there every day with his daughter, had undoubtedly noticed him, and probably thought his assiduity very strange.

For the first time, also, he felt a certain irreverence in designating this unknown man, even in the silence of his thought, by the nickname of M. Leblanc.

He remained thus for some minutes with his head down tracing designs on the ground with a little stick which he had in his hand.

Then he turned abruptly away from the seat, away from Monsieur Leblanc and his daughter, and went home.

That day he forgot to go to dinner. At eight o'clock in the evening he discovered it, and as it was too late to go down to the Rue Saint Jacques, "No matter," said he, and he ate a piece of bread.

He did not retire until he had carefully brushed and folded his coat.

SUNDRY THUNDERBOLTS FALL UPON MA'AM BOUGON

NEXT day, Ma'am Bougon,—thus Courfeyrac designated the old portress-landlady of the Gorbeau tenement,—Ma'am Bougon—her name was in reality Madame Bougon, but this terrible fellow Courfeyrac respected nothing,—Ma'am Bougon was stupefied with astonishment to see Monsieur Marius go out again with his new coat.

He went again to the Luxembourg, but did not get beyond his seat midway of the walk. He sat down there as on the day previous, gazing from a distance and seeing distinctly the white hat, the black dress, and especially the bluish light. He did not stir from the seat, and did not go home until the gates of the Luxembourg were shut. He did not see Monsieur Leblanc and his daughter retire. He concluded from that that they left the garden by the gate on the Rue de l'Ouest. Later, some weeks afterwards, when he thought of it, he could not remember where he had dined that night.

The next day, for the third time, Ma'am Bougon was thunderstruck. Marius went out with his new suit. "Three days running!" she exclaimed.

She made an attempt to follow him, but Marius walked briskly and with immense strides; it was a hippopotamus undertaking to catch a chamois. In two minutes she lost sight of him, and came back out of breath, three quarters choked by her asthma, and furious. "The silly fellow," she muttered, "to put on his handsome clothes every day and make people run like that!"

Marius had gone to the Luxembourg.

The young girl was there with Monsieur Leblanc. Marius approached as near as he could, seeming to be reading a book, but he was still very far off, then he returned and sat down on his seat, where he spent four hours watching the artless little sparrows as they hopped along the walk; they seemed to him to be mocking him.

Thus a fortnight rolled away. Marius went to the Luxembourg, no longer to promenade, but to sit down, always in the same place, and without knowing why. Once there he did not stir. Every morning he put on his new suit, not to be conspicuous, and he began again the next morning.

She was indeed of a marvellous beauty. The only remark which could be made, that would resemble a criticism, is that the contradiction between her look, which was sad, and her smile, which was joyous, gave to her countenance something a little wild, which produced this effect, that at certain moments this sweet face became strange without ceasing to be charming.

TAKEN PRISONER

On one of the last days of the second week, Marius was as usual sitting on his seat, holding in his hand an open book of which he had not turned a leaf for two hours. Suddenly he trembled. A great event was commencing at the end of the walk. Monsieur Leblanc and his daughter had left their seat, the daughter had taken the arm of the father, and they were coming slowly towards the middle of the walk where Marius was. Marius closed his book, then he opened it, then he made an attempt to read. He trembled. The halo was coming straight towards him. "O dear!" thought he, "I shall not have time to take an attitude." However, the man with the white hair and the young girl were advancing. It seemed to him that it would last a century, and that it was only a second. "What are they coming by here for?" he asked himself. "What! is she going to pass this place! Are her feet to press this ground in this walk, but a step from me?" He was overwhelmed, he would gladly have been very handsome, he would gladly have worn the cross of the Legion of Honour. He heard the gentle and measured sound of their steps approaching. He imagined that Monsieur Leblanc was hurling angry looks upon him.

"Is he going to speak to me?" thought he. He bowed his head; when he raised it they were quite near him. The young girl passed, and in passing she looked at him. She looked at him steadily, with a sweet and thoughtful look which made Marius tremble from head to foot. It seemed to him that she reproached him for having been so long without coming to her, and that she said: "It is I who come." Marius was bewildered by these eyes full of flashing light and fathomless abysses.

He felt as though his brain were on fire. She had come to him, what happiness! And then, how she had looked at him! She seemed more beautiful than she had ever seemed before.

He followed her with his eyes till she disappeared, then he began to walk in the Luxembourg like a madman. It is probable that at times he laughed, alone as he was, and spoke aloud.

He went out of the Luxembourg to find her again in some street.

He was desperately in love.

One glance had done all that.

When the mine is loaded, and the match is ready, nothing is simpler. A glance is a spark.

It was all over with him. Marius loved a woman. His destiny was entering upon the unknown.

ADVENTURES OF THE LETTER U ABANDONED TO CONJECTURE

A WHOLE month passed during which Marius went every day to the Luxembourg. When the hour came, nothing could keep him away. "He is out at service," said Courfeyrac. Marius lived in transports. It is certain that the young girl looked at him.

He finally grew bolder, and approached nearer to the seat. However he passed before it no more, obeying at once the instinct of timidity and the instinct of prudence, peculiar to lovers. He thought it better not to attract the "attention of the father." He formed his combinations of stations behind trees and the pedestals of statues with consummate art, so as to be seen as much as possible by the young girl and as little as possible by the old gentleman. Sometimes he would stand for half an hour motionless behind some Leonidas or Spartacus with a book in his hand, over which his eyes, timidly raised, were looking for the young girl, while she, for her part, was turning her charming profile towards him, suffused with a smile. While yet talking in the most natural and quiet way in the world with the white-haired man, she rested upon Marius all the dreams of a maidenly and passionate eye.

We must, however, suppose that M. Leblanc perceived something of this at last, for often when Marius came, he would rise and begin to promenade. He had left their accustomed place, and had taken the seat at the other end of the walk, near the Gladiator, as if to see whether Marius would follow them. Marius did not understand it, and committed that blunder. "The father" began to be less punctual, and did not bring "his daughter" every day. Sometimes he came alone. Then Marius did not stay. Another blunder.

Marius took no note of these symptoms. From the phase of timidity he had passed, a natural and inevitable progress, to the phase of blindness. His love grew. He dreamed of her every night. And then there came to him a good fortune for which he had not even hoped, oil upon the fire, double darkness upon his eyes. One night, at dusk, he found on the seat, which "M. Leblanc and his daughter" had just left, a handkerchief, a plain handkerchief without embroidery, but white, fine, and which appeared to him to exhale ineffable odours. He seized it in transport. This handkerchief was marked with the letters U. F.: Marius knew nothing of this beautiful girl, neither her family, nor her name, nor her dwelling; these two letters were the first thing he had caught of her, adorable initials upon which he began straightway to build his castle. It was evidently her first name. Ursula, thought he, what a sweet name! He kissed the handkerchief, inhaled its perfume, put it over his heart, on his flesh in the day-time, and at night went to sleep with it on his lips.

"I feel her whole soul in it!" he exclaimed.

This handkerchief belonged to the old gentleman, who had simply let it fall from his pocket.

AN ECLIPSE

We have seen how Marius discovered, or thought he discovered, that Her name was Ursula.

Hunger comes with love. To know that her name was Ursula had been much; it was little. In three or four weeks Marius had devoured this piece of good fortune. He desired another. He wished to know where she lived.

He had committed one blunder in falling into the snare of the seat by the Gladiator. He had committed a second by not remaining at the Luxembourg when Monsieur Leblanc came there alone. He committed a third, a monstrous one. He followed "Ursula."

She lived in the Rue de l'Ouest, in the least frequented part of it, in a new three-story house, of modest appearance.

From that moment Marius added to his happiness in seeing her at the Luxembourg, the happiness of following her home.

His hunger increased. He knew her name, her first name, at least, the charming name, the real name of a woman; he knew where she lived; he desired to know who she was.

One night after he had followed them home, and seen them disappear at the porte-cochère, he entered after them, and said boldly to the porter:—

"Is it the gentleman on the first floor who has just come in?"

"No," answered the porter. "It is the gentleman on the third."

Another fact. This success made Marius still bolder.

"In front?" he asked.

"Faith!" said the porter, "the house is only built on the street."

"And what is this gentleman?"

"He lives on his income, monsieur. A very kind man, who does a great deal of good among the poor, though not rich."

"What is his name?" continued Marius.

The porter raised his head, and said:—

"Is monsieur a detective?"

Marius retired, much abashed, but still in great transports. He was getting on.

"Good," thought he. "I know that her name is Ursula, that she is the daughter of a retired gentleman, and that she lives there, in the third story, in the Rue de l'Ouest."

Next day Monsieur Leblanc and his daughter made but a short visit to the Luxembourg; they went away while it was yet broad daylight. Marius followed them into the Rue de l'Ouest, as was his custom. On reaching the porte-cochère, Monsieur Leblanc passed his daughter in, and then stopped, and before entering himself, turned and looked steadily at Marius. The day after that they did not come to the Luxembourg. Marius waited in vain all day.

At nightfall he went to the Rue de l'Ouest, and saw a light in the windows of the third story. He walked beneath these windows until the light was put out.

The next day nobody at the Luxembourg. Marius waited all day, and then went to perform his night duty under the windows. That took him till ten o'clock in the evening. His dinner took care of itself. Fever supports the sick man, and love the lover.

He passed a week in this way. Monsieur Leblanc and his daughter appeared at the Luxembourg no more. Marius made melancholy conjectures; he dared not watch the porte-cochère during the day. He limited himself to going at night to gaze upon the reddish light of the windows. At times he saw shadows moving, and his heart beat high.

On the eighth day when he reached the house, there was no light in the windows. "What!" he said, "the lamp is not yet lighted. But yet it is dark. Or they have gone out?" He waited till ten o'clock.

Till midnight. Till one o'clock in the morning. No light appeared in the third story windows, and nobody entered the house. He went away very gloomy.

On the morrow—for he lived only from morrow to morrow; there was no longer any to-day, so to speak, to him—on the morrow he found nobody at the Luxembourg, he waited; at dusk he went to the house. No light in the windows; the blinds were closed; the third story was entirely dark.

Marius knocked at the porte-cochère; went in and said to the porter:—

"The gentleman of the third floor?"

"Moved," answered the porter.

Marius tottered, and said feebly:

"Since when?"

"Yesterday."

"Where does he live now?"

"I don't know anything about it."

"He has not left his new address, then?"

"No."

And the porter, looking up, recognised Marius.

"What! it is you!" said he, but decidedly now, "you do keep a bright look-out."

BOOK VII—PATRON MINETTE

BABET, GUEULEMER, CLAQUESOUS, AND MONTPARNASSE

A QUARTETTE of bandits, Claquesous, Gueulemer, Babet, and Montparnasse, ruled from 1830 to 1835 over the third sub-stage of Paris.

Gueulemer was a Hercules without a pedestal. His cave was the Arche-Marion sewer. He was six feet high, and had a marble chest, brazen biceps, cavernous lungs, a colossus' body, and a bird's skull. You would think you saw the Farnese Hercules dressed in duck pantaloons and a cotton-velvet waistcoat. Gueulemer built in this sculptural fashion, could have subdued monsters; he found it easier to become one. Low forehead, large temples, less than forty, the foot of a goose, coarse short hair, a bushy cheek, a wild boar's beard; from this you see the man. His muscles asked for work, his stupidity would have none. This was a huge lazy force. He was an assassin through nonchalance. He was thought to be a creole. Probably there was a little of Marshall Brown in him, he having been a porter at Avignon in 1815. After this he had become a bandit.

The diaphaneity of Babet contrasted with the meatiness of Gueulemer. Babet was thin and shrewd. He was transparent, but impenetrable. You could see the light through his bones, but nothing through his eye. He professed to be a chemist. He had been barkeeper for Bobèche, and clown for Bobino. He had played vaudeville at Saint Mihiel. He was an affected man, a great talker, who italicised his smiles and quoted his gestures.

What was Claquesous? He was night. Before showing himself, he waited till the sky was daubed with black. At night he came out of a hole, which he went into again before day. Where was this hole? Nobody knew. In the most perfect obscurity, and to his accomplices, he always turned his back when he spoke. Was his name Claquesous?

No. He said: "My name is Nothing-at-all." If a candle was brought, he put on a mask. He was a ventriloquist. Babet said: *"Claquesous is a night-bird with two voices."* Claquesous was restless, roving, terrible. It was not certain that he had a name, Claquesous being a nickname; it was not certain that he had a voice, his chest speaking oftener than his mouth; it was not certain that he had a face, nobody having ever seen anything but his mask. He disappeared as if he sank into the ground; he came like an apparition.

A mournful sight was Montparnasse. Montparnasse was a child; less than twenty, with a pretty face, lips like cherries, charming black locks, the glow of spring in his eyes; he had all the vices and aspired to all the crimes. The digestion of what was bad gave him an appetite for what was worse. He was the *gamin* turned vagabond, and the vagabond become an assassin. He was genteel, effeminate, graceful, robust, weak, and ferocious. He wore his hat turned upon the left side, to make room for the tuft of hair, according to the fashion of 1829. He lived by robbery.

Few prowlers were so much feared as Montparnasse. At eighteen, he had already left several corpses on his track. More than one traveller lay in the shadow of this wretch, with extended arms and with his face in a pool of blood. Frizzled, pomaded, with slender waist, hips like a woman, the bust of a Prussian officer, a buzz of admiration about him from the girls of the boulevard, an elaborately-tied cravat, a slung-shot in his pocket, a flower in his button-hole; such was this charmer of the sepulchre.

BOOK VIII—THE NOXIOUS POOR

MARIUS, LOOKING FOR A GIRL WITH A HAT, MEETS A MAN WITH A CAP

Summer passed, then autumn; winter came. Neither M. Leblanc nor the young girl had set foot in the Luxembourg. Marius had now but one thought, to see that sweet, that adorable face again. He searched continually; he searched everywhere: he found nothing. He was no longer Marius the enthusiastic dreamer, the resolute man, ardent yet firm, the bold challenger of destiny, the brain which projected and built future upon future, the young heart full of plans, projects, prides, ideas, and desires; he was a lost dog. He fell into a melancholy. It was all over with him. Work disgusted him, walking fatigued him, solitude wearied him, vast nature, once so full of forms, of illuminations, of voices, of counsels, of perspectives, of horizons, of teachings, was now a void before him. It seemed to him that everything had disappeared.

He was still full of thought, for he could not be otherwise; but he no longer found pleasure in his thoughts. To all which they were silently but incessantly proposing to him, he answered in the gloom: What is the use?

He reproached himself a hundred times. Why did I follow her? I was so happy in seeing her only! She looked upon me; was not that infinite? She had the appearance of loving me. Was not that everything? I desired to have what? There is nothing more after that.

At another time, an accidental meeting produced a singular effect upon him. In one of the little streets in the neighbourhood of the Boulevard des Invalides, he saw a man dressed like a labourer, wearing a cap with a long visor, from beneath which escaped a few locks of very white hair. Marius was struck by the beauty of this white hair, and noticed the man who was walking with slow steps and seemed absorbed in painful meditation. Strangely enough, it appeared to him that he recognised M. Leblanc. It was the same hair, the same profile, as far as the cap allowed him to see, the same manner, only sadder. But why these working-man's clothes? what did that mean? what did this disguise signify? Marius was astounded. When he came to himself, his first impulse was to follow the man; who knows but he had at last caught the trace which he was seeking? At all events, he must see the man again nearer, and clear up the enigma. But this idea occurred to him too late, the man was now gone. He had taken some side-street, and Marius could not find him again. This adventure occupied his mind for a few days, and then faded away. "After all," said he to himself, "it is probably only a resemblance."

A WAIF

Marius still lived in the Gorbeau tenement. He paid no attention to anybody there.

At this time, it is true, there were no occupants remaining in the house but himself and those Jondrettes whose rent he had once paid, without having ever spoken, however, either to the father, or to the mother, or to the daughters. The other tenants had moved away or died, or had been turned out for not paying their rent.

One day, in the course of this winter, the sun shone a little in the afternoon, but it was the second of February, that ancient Candlemas-day whose treacherous sun, the precursor of six weeks of cold, inspired Matthew Laensberg with these two lines, which have deservedly become classic:

Qu'il luise ou qu'il luiserne,
L'ours rentre en sa caverne.[1]

Marius had just left his; night was falling. It was his dinner hour; for it was still necessary for him to go to dinner, alas! oh, infirmity of the ideal passions.

He had just crossed his door-sill which Ma'am Bougon was sweeping at that very moment, muttering at the same time this memorable monologue:

"What is there that is cheap now? everything is dear. There is nothing but people's trouble that is cheap; that comes for nothing, people's trouble."

Marius went slowly up the boulevard towards the barrière, on the way to the Rue Saint Jacques. He was walking thoughtfully, with his head down.

Suddenly he felt that he was elbowed in the dusk; he turned, and saw two young girls in rags, one tall and slender, the other a little shorter, passing rapidly by, breathless, frightened, and apparently in flight; they had met him, had not seen him, and had jostled him in passing. Marius could see in the twilight their livid faces, their hair tangled and flying, their frightful bonnets, their tattered skirts, and their naked feet. As they ran they were talking to each other. The taller one said in a very low voice:

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[1] Let it gleam or let it glimmer,
The Bear returns into his cave.

"The *cognes* came. They just missed *pincer* me at the *demicercle.*"

The other answered: "I saw them. I *cavalé, cavalé, cavalé.*"

Marius understood, through this dismal argot, that the gendarmes, or the city police, had not succeeded in seizing these two girls and that the girls had escaped.

They plunged in under the trees of the boulevard behind him, and for a few seconds made a kind of dim whiteness in the obscurity which soon faded out.

Marius stopped for a moment.

He was about to resume his course when he perceived a little greyish packet on the ground at his feet. He stooped down and picked it up. It was a sort of envelope which appeared to contain papers.

"Good," said he, "those poor creatures must have dropped this!"

He retraced his steps, he called, he did not find them; he concluded they were already beyond hearing, put the packet in his pocket, and went to dinner.

On his way, in an alley on the Rue Mouffetard, he saw a child's coffin covered with a black cloth, placed upon three chairs and lighted by a candle. The two girls of the twilight returned to his mind.

"Poor mothers," thought he. "There is one thing sadder than to see their children die—to see them lead evil lives."

Then these shadows which had varied his sadness went out from his thoughts, and he fell back into his customary train. He began to think of his six months of love and happiness in the open air and the broad daylight under the beautiful trees of the Luxembourg.

"How dark my life has become!" said he to himself. "Young girls still pass before me. Only formerly they were angels; now they are ghouls."

QUADRIFRONS

In the evening, as he was undressing to go to bed, he happened to feel in his coat-pocket the packet which he had picked up on the boulevard.

He had forgotten it. He thought it might be well to open it, and that the packet might perhaps contain the address of the young girls, if, in reality, it belonged to them, or at all events the information necessary to restore it to the person who had lost it.

He opened the envelope.

It was unsealed and contained four letters, also unsealed.

The addresses were upon them.

All four exhaled an odour of wretched tobacco.

The first letter was addressed: *To Madame, Madame the Marchioness de Grucheray, Square opposite the Chamber of Deputies, No.*——

Marius said to himself that he should probably find in this letter the information of which he was in search, and that, moreover, as the letter was not sealed, probably it might be read without impropriety. He read the letter hurriedly. It was signed by "Don Alvares, Spanish captain of cabalry"

No address was added to the signature. Marius hoped to find the address in the second letter the superscription of which ran: *to Madame, Madame the Comtess de Montvernet, Rue Cassette, No.* 9. This letter was simply signed, "Mother Balizard."

Marius passed to the third letter, which was, like the preceding, a begging one, this time signed by one "Genflot, man of letters."

He finally opened the fourth letter. There was on the address: *To the beneficent gentleman of the church Saint Jaques du Haut Pas.* It contained these few lines:

"Beneficent man,

"If you will deign to accompany my daughter, you will see a misserable calamity, and I will show you my certificates.

"At the sight of these writings your generous soul will be moved with a sentiment of lively benevolence, for true philosophers always experience vivid emotions.

"Agree, compassionate man, that one must experience the most cruel necessity, and that it is very painful, to obtain relief, to have it attested by authority as if we were not free to suffer and to die of inanition while waiting for some one to relieve our missery. The fates are very cruel to some and too lavish or too careful to others.

"I await your presence or your offering, if you deign to make it, and I pray you to have the kindness to accept the respectful sentiments with which I am proud to be,

"Truly magnanimous man,
"Your very humble
"And very obedient servant,
"P. Fabantou, dramatic artist."

After reading these four letters, Marius did not find himself much wiser than before.

In the first place none of the signers gave his address.

Then they seemed to come from four different individuals, Don Alvarès, Mother Balizard, the poet Genflot, and the dramatic artist Fabantou; but, strangely enough, these letters were all four written in the same hand.

What was the conclusion from that, unless that they came from the same person?

Moreover, and this rendered the conjecture still more probable, the paper, coarse and yellow, was the same in all four, the odour of tobacco was the same, and although there was an evident endeavour to vary the style, the same faults of orthography were reproduced with a very quiet certainty, and Genflot, the man of letters, was no more free from them than the Spanish captain.

To endeavour to unriddle this little mystery was a useless labour. If it had not been a waif, it would have had the appearance of a mystification. Marius was too sad to take a joke kindly even from chance, or to lend himself to the game which the street pavement seemed to wish to play with him.

Nothing, however, indicated that these letters belonged to the girls whom Marius had met on the boulevard. After all, they were but waste paper evidently without value.

Marius put them back into the envelope, threw it into a corner, and went to bed.

About seven o'clock in the morning, he had got up and breakfasted, and was trying to set about his work when there was a gentle rap at his door.

There was a second rap, very gentle like the first.

"Come in," said Marius.

The door opened.

"What do you want, Ma'am Bougon?" asked Marius, without raising his eyes from the books and papers which he had on his table.

A voice, which was not Ma'am Bougon's, answered:

"I beg your pardon, Monsieur——"

Marius turned quickly and saw a young girl.

A ROSE IN MISERY

A girl who was quite young, was standing in the half-opened door. The little round window through which the light found its way into the garret was exactly opposite the door, and lit up this form with a pallid light. It was a pale, puny, meagre creature, nothing but a chemise and a skirt covered a shivering and chilly nakedness. A string for a belt, a string for a headdress, sharp shoulders protruding from the chemise, a blond and lymphatic pallor, dirty shoulder-blades, red hands, the mouth open and sunken, some teeth gone, the eyes dull, bold, and drooping, the form of an unripe young girl and the look of a corrupted old woman; fifty years joined with fifteen; one of those beings who are both feeble and horrible at once, and who make those shudder whom they do not make weep.

Marius arose and gazed with a kind of astonishment upon this being, so much like the shadowy forms which pass across our dreams.

The most touching thing about it was that this young girl had not come into the world to be ugly. In her early childhood, she must have even been pretty. The grace of her youth was still struggling against the hideous old age brought on by debauchery and poverty. A remnant of beauty was dying out upon this face of sixteen, like the pale sun which is extinguished by frightful clouds at the dawn of a winter's day.

The face was not absolutely unknown to Marius. He thought he remembered having seen it somewhere.

"What do you wish, mademoiselle?" asked he.

The young girl answered with her voice like a drunken galley-slave's:

"Here is a letter for you, Monsieur Marius."

She called Marius by his name; he could not doubt that her business was with him; but what was this girl? how did she know his name?

Without waiting for an invitation, she entered. She entered resolutely, looking at the whole room and the unmade bed with a sort of assurance which chilled the heart. She was barefooted. Great holes in her skirt revealed her long limbs and her sharp knees. She was shivering.

She had really in her hand a letter which she presented to Marius.

Marius, in opening this letter, noticed that the enormously large wafer was still wet. The message could not have come far. He read:

"My amiable neighbour, young man!

"I have learned your kindness towards me, that you have paid my rent six months ago. I bless you, young man. My eldest daughter will tell you that we have been without a morsel of bread for two days, four persons, and my spouse sick. If I am not desseived by my thoughts, I think I may hope that your generous heart will soften at this exposure and that the desire will subjugate you of being propitious to me by deigning to lavish upon me some light gift.

"I am with the distinguished consideration which is due to the benefactors of humanity,

"Jondrette.

"P. S. My daughter will await your orders, dear Monsieur Marius."

This letter, in the midst of the obscure accident which had occupied Marius's thoughts since the previous evening, was a candle in a cave. Everything was suddenly cleared up.

This letter came from the same source as the other four. It was the same writing, the same style, the same orthography, the same paper, the same odour of tobacco.

There were five missives, five stories, five names, five signatures, and a single signer. The Spanish Captain Don Alvarès, the unfortunate Mother Balizard, the dramatic poet Genflot, the old comedy writer Fabantou, were all four named Jondrette, if indeed the name of Jondrette himself was Jondrette.

During the now rather long time that Marius had lived in the tenement, he had had, as we have said, but very few opportunities to see, or even catch a glimpse of his very poor neighbours. His mind was elsewhere, and where the mind is, thither the eyes are directed. He must have met the Jondrettes in the passage and on the stairs, more than once, but to him they were only shadows; he had taken so little notice that on the previous evening he had brushed against the Jondrette girls upon the boulevard without recognising them; for it was evidently they; and it was with great difficulty that this girl, who had just come into his room, had awakened in him, beneath his disgust and pity, a vague remembrance of having met with her elsewhere.

Now he saw everything clearly. He understood that the occupation of his neighbour Jondrette in his distress was to work upon the sympathies of benevolent persons; that he procured their addresses, and that he wrote under assumed names letters to people whom he deemed rich and compassionate, which his daughters carried, at their risk and peril; for this father was one who risked his daughters; he was playing a game with destiny, and he put them into the stake. Marius understood, to judge by their flight in the evening, by their breathlessness, by their terror, by those words of argot which he had heard, that probably these unfortunate things were carrying on also some of the secret trades of darkness, and that from all this the result was, in the midst of human society constituted as it is, two miserable beings who were neither children, nor girls, nor women, a species of impure yet innocent monsters produced by misery.

She went to the table.

"Ah!" said she, "books!"

A light flashed through her glassy eye. She resumed, and her tone expressed that happiness of being able to boast of something, to which no human creature is insensible:

"I can read, I can."

She hastily caught up the book which lay open on the table, and read fluently:

"——General Bauduin received the order to take five battalions of his brigade and carry the chateau of Hougomont, which is in the middle of the plain of Waterloo——"

She stopped:

"Ah, Waterloo! I know that. It is a battle in old times. My father was there; my father served in the armies. We are jolly good Bonapartists at home, that we are. Against English, Waterloo is."

She put down the book, took up a pen and exclaimed:

"And I can write, too!"

She dipped the pen in the ink, and turning towards Marius:

"Would you like to see? Here, I am going to write a word to show."

And before he had had time to answer, she wrote upon a sheet of blank paper which was on the middle of the table: *"The Cognes are here."*

Then, throwing down the pen:

"There are no mistakes in spelling. You can look. We have received an education, my sister and I. We have not always been what we are. We were not made——"

Here she stopped, fixed her faded eye upon Marius, and burst out laughing, saying in a tone which contained complete anguish stifled by complete cynicism:

"Bah!"

Marius had drawn back quietly.

"Mademoiselle," said he, with his cold gravity, "I have here a packet, which is yours, I think. Permit me to return it to you."

And he handed her the envelope, which contained the four letters.

She clapped her hands and exclaimed:

"We have looked everywhere!"

Then she snatched the packet, and opened the envelope, saying:

"Lordy, Lordy, haven't we looked, my sister and I? And you have found it! on the boulevard, didn't you? It must have been on the boulevard? You see, this dropped when we ran. It was my brat of a sister who made the stupid blunder. When we got home, we could not find it. As we did not want to be beaten, since that is needless, since that is entirely needless, since that is absolutely needless, we said at home that we had carried the letters to the persons and that they told us: Nix! Now here they are, these poor letters. And how did you know they were mine? Ah, yes! by the writing! It was you, then, that we knocked against last evening. We did not see you, really! I said to my sister: "Is that a gentleman? My sister said:—I think it is a gentleman!"

Meanwhile, she had unfolded the petition addressed "to the beneficent gentleman of the church Saint Jacques du Haut Pas."

"Here!" said she, "this is for the old fellow who goes to mass. And this too is the hour. I am going to carry it to him. He will give us something perhaps for breakfast."

Then she began to laugh, and added:

"Do you know what it will be if we have breakfast to-day? It will be that we shall have had our breakfast for day before yesterday, our dinner for day before yesterday, our breakfast for yesterday, our dinner for yesterday, all that at one time this morning. Yes! zounds! if you're not satisfied, stuff till you burst, dogs!"

This reminded Marius of what the poor girl had come to his room for.

After a thorough exploration of his pockets, Marius at last got together five francs and sixteen sous. This was at the time all that he had in the world. "That is enough for my dinner to-day," thought he, "to-morrow we will see." He took the sixteen sous, and gave the five francs to the young girl.

She took the piece eagerly.

"Good," said she, "there is some sunshine!"

She drew her chemise up over her shoulders, made a low bow to Marius, then a familiar wave of the hand, and moved towards the door.

On her way she saw on the bureau a dry crust of bread moulding there in the dust; she sprang upon it, and bit it, muttering:

"That is good! it is hard! it breaks my teeth!"

Then she went out.

THE JUDAS OF PROVIDENCE

For five years Marius had lived in poverty, in privation, in distress even, but he perceived that he had never known real misery. Real misery he had just seen. It was this sprite which had just passed before his eyes. In fact, he who has seen the misery of man only has seen nothing, he must see the misery of woman; he who has seen the misery of woman only has seen nothing, he must see the misery of childhood.

This young girl was to Marius a sort of messenger from the night. She revealed to him an entire and hideous aspect of the darkness

Marius almost reproached himself with the fact that he had been so absorbed in his reveries and passion that he had not until now cast a glance upon his neighbours. Paying their rent was a mechanical impulse; everybody would have had that impulse; but he, Marius, should have done better. What! a mere wall separated him from these abandoned beings, who lived by groping in the night without the pale of the living; he came in contact with them, he was in some sort the last link of the human race which they touched, he heard them live or rather breathe beside him, and he took no notice of them! every day at every moment, he heard them through the wall, walking, going, coming, talking, and he did not lend his ear! and in these words there were groans, and he did not even listen, his thoughts were elsewhere, upon dreams, upon impossible glimmerings, upon loves in the sky, upon infatuations; and all the while human beings, his brothers in Jesus Christ, his brothers in the people, were suffering death agonies beside him! agonising uselessly; he even caused a portion of their suffering, and aggravated it. For had they had another neighbour, a less chimerical and more observant neighbour, an ordinary and charitable man, it was clear that their poverty would have been noticed, their signals of distress would have been seen, and long ago perhaps they would have been gathered up and saved! Undoubtedly they seemed very depraved, very corrupt, very vile, very hateful, even, but those are rare who fall without becoming degraded; there is a point, moreover, at which the unfortunate and the infamous are associated and confounded in a single word, a fatal word, *Les Misérables;* whose fault is it? And then, is it not when the fall is lowest that charity ought to be greatest?

While he thus preached to himself, for there were times when Marius, like all truly honest hearts, was his own monitor, and scolded himself more than he deserved, he looked at the wall which separated him from the Jondrettes, as if he could send his pitying glance through that partition to warn those unfortunate beings. The wall was a thin layer of plaster, upheld by laths and joists, through which, as we have just seen, voices and words could be distinguished perfectly. None but the dreamer, Marius, would not have perceived this before. There was no paper hung on this wall, either on the side of the Jondrettes, or on Marius' side; its coarse construction was bare to the eye. Almost unconsciously, Marius examined this partition; sometimes reverie examines, observes, and scrutinises, as thought would do. Suddenly he arose, he noticed towards the top, near the ceiling, a triangular hole, where three laths left a space between them. The plaster which should have stopped this hole was gone, and by getting upon the bureau he could see through that hole into the Jondrettes' garret. Pity has and should have its curiosity. This hole was a kind of Judas. It is lawful to look upon misfortune like a betrayer for the sake of relieving it. "Let us see what these people are," thought Marius, "and to what they are reduced."

He climbed upon the bureau, put his eye to the crevice, and looked.

THE WILD MAN IN HIS LAIR

Cities, like forests, have their dens in which hide all their vilest and most terrible monsters. But in cities, what hides thus is ferocious, unclean, and petty, that is to say, ugly; in forests, what hides is ferocious, savage, and grand, that is to say, beautiful. Den for den, those of beasts are preferable to those of men. Caverns are better than the wretched holes which shelter humanity.

What Marius saw was a hole.

Marius was poor and his room was poorly furnished, but even as his poverty was noble, his garret was clean. The den into which his eyes were at that moment directed, was abject, filthy, fetid, infectious, gloomy, unclean. All the furniture was a straw chair, a rickety table, a few old broken dishes, and in two of the corners two indescribable pallets; all the light came from a dormer window of four panes, curtained with spider's webs. Just enough light came through that loophole to make a man's face appear like the face of a phantom. The walls had a leprous look, and were covered with seams and scars like a face disfigured by some horrible malady; a putrid moisture oozed from them. Obscene pictures could be discovered upon them coarsely sketched in charcoal.

One of the pallets was near the door, the other near the window. Each had one end next the chimney and both were opposite Marius. In a corner near the opening through which Marius was looking, hanging upon the wall in a black wooden frame, was a coloured engraving at the bottom of which was written in large letters: THE DREAM.

Below this frame a sort of wooden panel longer than it was wide was standing on the floor and leaning at an angle against the wall. It had the appearance of a picture set against the wall, of a frame probably daubed on the other side, of a pier glass taken down from a wall and forgotten to be hung again.

By the table, upon which Marius saw a pen, ink, and paper, was seated a man of about sixty, small, thin, livid, haggard, with a keen, cruel, and restless air; a hideous harpy.

This man had a long grey beard. He was dressed in a woman's chemise, which showed his shaggy breast and his naked arms bristling with grey hairs. Below this chemise, were a pair of muddy pantaloons and boots from which the toes stuck out.

He had a pipe in his mouth, and was smoking. There was no more bread in the den, but there was tobacco.

He was writing, probably some such letter as those which Marius had read.

Here he stopped, struck his fist on the table, and added, gnashing his teeth:

"Oh! I could eat the world!"

A big woman, who might have been forty years old or a hundred, was squatting near the fireplace, upon her bare feet.

She also was dressed only in a chemise and a knit skirt patched with pieces of old cloth. A coarse tow apron covered half the skirt. Although this woman was bent and drawn up into herself, it could be seen that she was very tall. She was a kind of giantess by the side of her husband. She had hideous hair, light red sprinkled with grey, that she pushed back from time to time with her huge shining hands which had flat nails.

Upon one of the pallets Marius could discern a sort of slender little wan girl seated, almost naked, with her feet hanging down, having the appearance neither of listening, nor of seeing, nor of living.

The younger sister, doubtless, of the one who had come to his room.

She appeared to be eleven or twelve years old. On examining her attentively, he saw that she must be fourteen. It was the child who, the evening before, on the boulevard, said: "I *cavalé, cavalé, cavalé!*"

The man became silent, the woman did not speak, the girl did not seem to breathe. Marius could hear the pen scratching over the paper.

The man muttered out, without ceasing to write:—"Rabble! rabble! all is rabble!"

This variation upon the ejaculation of Solomon drew a sigh from the woman.

"My darling, be calm," said she. "Do not hurt yourself, dear. You are too good to write to all those people, my man."

In poverty bodies hug close to each other, as in the cold, but hearts grow distant. This woman, according to all appearance, must have loved this man with as much love as was in her; but probably, in the repeated mutual reproaches which grew out of the frightful distress that weighed upon them all, this love had become extinguished. She now felt towards her husband nothing more than the ashes of affection. Still the words of endearment, as often happens, had survived. She said to him: *Dear; my darling; my man,* etc., with her lips, her heart was silent.

The man returned to his writing.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Marius, with a heavy heart, was about to get down from the sort of observatory which he had extemporised, when a sound attracted his attention, and induced him to remain in his place.

The door of the garret was hastily opened. The eldest daughter appeared upon the threshold. On her feet she had coarse men's shoes, covered with mud, which had been spattered as high as her red ankles, and she was wrapped in a ragged old gown which Marius had not seen upon her an hour before, but which she had probably left at his door that she might inspire the more pity, and which she must have put on upon going out. She came in, pushed the door to behind her, stopped to take breath, for she was quite breathless, then cried with an expression of joy and triumph:

"He is coming!"

The father turned his eyes, the woman turned her head, the younger sister did not stir.

"Who?" asked the father.

"The gentleman!"

"The philanthropist?"

"Yes."

"Of the church of Saint Jacques?"

"Yes."

"That old man?"

"Yes."

"Is he going to come?"

"He is behind me?"

"You are sure?"

"I am sure."

"There, true, he is coming?"

"He is coming in a fiacre."

"In a fiacre. It is Rothschild?"

The father arose.

"And you are sure, then, sure that he is coming?"

"He is at my heels," said she.

The man sprang up. There was a sort of illumination on his face

"Wife!" cried he, "you hear. Here is the philanthropist. Put out the fire."

The astounded woman did not stir.

The father, with the agility of a mountebank, caught a broken pot which stood on the mantel, and threw some water upon the embers.

Then turning to his elder daughter:

"You! unbottom the chair!"

His daughter did not understand him at all.

He seized the chair, and with a kick he ruined the seat. His leg went through it.

As he drew out his leg, he asked his daughter:

"Is it cold?"

"Very cold. It snows."

The father turned towards the youngest girl, who was on the pallet near the window, and cried in a thundering voice:

"Quick! off the bed, good-for-nothing! will you never do any thing? break a pane of glass!"

The little girl sprang off the bed trembling.

"Break a pane of glass!" said he again.

The child was speechless.

"Do you hear me?" repeated the father, "I tell you to break a pane!"

The child, with a sort of terrified obedience, rose upon tiptoe, and struck her fist into a pane. The glass broke and fell with a crash.

"Good," said the father.

He was serious, yet rapid. His eyes ran hastily over all the nooks and corners of the garret.

You would have said he was a general, making his final preparations at the moment when the battle was about to begin.

The mother, who had not yet said a word, got up and asked in a slow, muffled tone, her words seeming to come out as if curdled:

"Dear, what is it you want to do?"

"Get into bed," answered the man.

His tone admitted of no deliberation. The mother obeyed, and threw herself heavily upon one of the pallets.

Meanwhile a sob was heard in a corner.

"What is that?" cried the father.

The youngest daughter, without coming out of the darkness into which she had shrunk, showed her bleeding fist. In breaking the glass she had cut herself; she had gone to her mother's bed, and she was weeping in silence.

It was the mother's turn to rise and cry out.

"You see now! what stupid things you are doing? breaking your glass, she has cut herself!"

"So much the better!" said the man. "I knew she would."

"How! so much the better?" resumed the woman.

"Silence!" replied the father. "I suppress the liberty of the press."

Then tearing the chemise which he had on, he made a bandage with which he hastily wrapped up the little girl's bleeding wrist.

That done, his eye fell upon the torn chemise with satisfaction.

"And the chemise too," said he, "all this has a good appearance.

An icy wind whistled at the window and came into the room. The mist from without entered and spread about like a whitish wadding picked apart by invisible fingers. Through the broken pane the falling snow was seen. The cold promised the day before by the Candlemas sun had come indeed.

The father cast a glance about him as if to assure himself that he had forgotten nothing. He took an old shovel and spread ashes over the moistened embers in such a way as to hide them completely.

Then rising and standing with his back to the chimney:

"Now," said he, "we can receive the philanthropist."

THE SUNBEAM IN THE HOLE

The large girl went to her father and laid her hand on his.

"Feel how cold I am," said she.

"Pshaw!" answered the father. "I am a good deal colder than that."

The mother cried impetuously:

"You always have everything better than the rest, even pain."

"Down!" said the man.

The mother, after a peculiar look from the man, held her peace.

There was a moment of silence in the den. The eldest daughter was scraping the mud off the bottom of her dress with a careless air, the young sister continued to sob; the mother had taken her head in both hands and was covering her with kisses, saying to her in a low tone:

"My treasure, I beg of you, it will be nothing, do not cry, you will make your father angry."

"No!" cried the father, "on the contrary! sob! sob! that does finely."

Then turning to the eldest:

"Ah! but he does not come! if he was not coming, I shall have put out my fire, knocked the bottom out of my chair, torn my chemise, and broken my window for nothing."

"And cut the little girl!" murmured the mother.

"Do you know," resumed the father, "that it is as cold as a dog in this devilish garret?"

Just then there was a light rap at the door, the man rushed forward and opened it, exclaiming with many low bows and smiles of adoration:

"Come in, monsieur! deign to come in, my noble benefactor, as well as your charming young lady."

A man of mature age and a young girl appeared at the door of the garret.

Marius had not left his place. What he felt at that moment escapes human language.

It was She.

Whoever has loved, knows all the radiant meaning contained in the three letters of this word: She.

It was indeed she. Marius could hardly discern her through the luminous vapour which suddenly spread over his eyes. It was that sweet absent being, that star which had been his light, for six months, it was that eye, that brow, that mouth, that beautiful vanished face which had produced night when it went away. The vision had been in an eclipse, it was reappearing.

She appeared again in this gloom, in this garret, in this shapeless den, in this horror!

Marius shuddered desperately. What! it was she! the beating of his heart disturbed his sight. He felt ready to melt into tears. What! at last he saw her again after having sought for her so long! it seemed to him that he had just lost his soul and that he had just found it again.

She was still the same, a little paler only; her delicate face was set in a violet velvet hat, her form was hidden under a black satin pelisse, below her long dress he caught a glimpse of her little foot squeezed into a silk buskin.

She was still accompanied by Monsieur Leblanc.

She stepped into the room and laid a large package on the table.

The elder Jondrette girl had retreated behind the door and was looking upon that velvet hat, that silk dress, and that charming happy face, with an evil eye.

JONDRETTE WEEPS ALMOST

The den was so dark that people who come from outdoors felt as if they were entering a cellar on coming in. The two new-comers stepped forward, therefore, with some hesitation, hardly discerning the dim forms about them, while they were seen and examined with perfect ease by the tenants of the garret, whose eyes were accustomed to this twilight.

Monsieur Leblanc approached with his kind and compassionate look, and said to the father:

"Monsieur, you will find in this package some new clothes, some stockings, and some new coverlids."

"Our angelic benefactor overwhelms us," said Jondrette, bowing down to the floor. Then, stooping to his eldest daughter's ear, while the two visitors were examining this lamentable abode, he added rapidly in a whisper:

"Well! what did I tell you? rags? no money. They are all alike! Tell me, how was the letter to this old blubber-lip signed?"

"Fabantou," answered the daughter.

"The dramatic artist, good!"

This was lucky for Jondrette, for at that very moment Monsieur Leblanc turned towards him and said to him, with the appearance of one who is trying to recollect a name:

"I see that you are to be pitied, Monsieur——"

"Fabantou," said Jondrette quickly.

"Monsieur Fabantou, yes, that is it. I remember."

"Dramatic artist, monsieur, and who has had his successes."

Here Jondrette evidently thought the moment come to make an impression upon the "philanthropist." He exclaimed in a tone of voice which belongs to the braggadocio of the juggler at a fair, and, at the same time, to the humility of a beggar on the highway: "Pupil of Talma! Monsieur! I am a pupil of Talma! Fortune once smiled on me. Alas! now it is the turn of misfortune. Look, my benefactor, no bread, no fire. My poor darlings have no fire! My only chair unseated! A broken window! in such weather as is this! My spouse in bed! sick!"

"Poor woman!" said Monsieur Leblanc.

"My child injured!" added Jondrette.

The child, whose attention had been diverted by the arrival of the strangers, was staring at "the young lady," and had ceased her sobbing.

"Why don't you cry? why don't you scream?" said Jondrette to her in a whisper.

At the same time he pinched her injured hand. All this with the skill of a juggler.

The little one uttered loud cries.

The adorable young girl whom Marius in his heart called "his Ursula" went quickly to her:

"Poor, dear child!" said she.

"Look, my beautiful young lady," pursued Jondrette, "her bleeding wrist! It is an accident which happened in working at a machine by which she earned six sous a day. It may be necessary to cut off her arm."

"Indeed!" said the old gentleman alarmed.

The little girl, taking this seriously, began to sob again beautifully.

"Alas, yes, my benefactor!" answered the father.

For some moments, Jondrette had been looking at "the philanthropist" in a strange manner. Even while speaking, he seemed to scrutinise him closely as if he were trying to recall some reminiscence. Suddenly, taking advantage of a moment when the new-comers were anxiously questioning the smaller girl about her mutilated hand, he passed over to his wife who was lying in her bed, appearing to be overwhelmed and stupid, and said to her quickly and in a very low tone:

"Notice that man!"

Then turning towards M. Leblanc, and continuing his lamentation:

"You see, monsieur! my whole dress is nothing but a chemise of my wife's! and that all torn! in the heart of winter. I cannot go out, for lack of a coat. If I had a sign of a coat, I should go to see Mademoiselle Mars, who knows me, and of whom I am a great favourite. She is still living in the Rue de la Tour des Dames, is not she? You know, monsieur, we have played together in the provinces. I shared her laurels. But no, nothing! And not a sou in the house! My wife sick, not a sou! My daughter dangerously injured, not a sou! My spouse has choking fits. It is her time of life, and the nervous system has something to do with it. She needs aid, and my daughter also! But the doctor! but the druggist! how can I pay them! not a penny! I would fall on my knees before a penny, monsieur! You see how the arts are fallen! Well, monsieur, my worthy monsieur, do you know what is going to happen to-morrow? To-morrow is the 4th of February, the fatal day, the last delay that my landlord will give me; if I do not pay him this evening, to-morrow my eldest daughter, myself, my spouse with her fever, my child with her wound, we shall

all four be turned out of doors, and driven off into the street, upon the boulevard, without shelter, into the rain, upon the snow. You see, monsieur, I owe four quarters, a year! that is sixty francs."

Jondrette lied. Four quarters would have made but forty francs, and he could not have owed for four, since it was not six months since Marius had paid for two.

M. Leblanc took five francs from his pocket and threw them on the table.

Jondrette had time to mutter into the ear of his elder daughter:

"The whelp! what does he think I am going to do with his five francs? That will not pay for my chair and my window! I must make my expenses!"

Meantime, M. Leblanc had taken off a large brown overcoat which he wore over his blue surtout, and hung it over the back of the chair.

"Monsieur Fabantou," said he, "I have only these five francs with me; but I am going to take my daughter home, and I will return this evening; is it not this evening that you have to pay?"

Jondrette's face lighted up with a strange expression. He answered quickly:

"Yes, my noble monsieur. At eight o'clock, I must be at my landlord's."

"I will be here at six o'clock, and I will bring you the sixty francs."

"My benefactor!" cried Jondrette, distractedly.

And he added in an undertone:

"Take a good look at him, wife!"

M. Leblanc took the arm of the beautiful young girl, and turned towards the door:

"Till this evening, my friends," said he.

"Six o'clock," said Jondrette.

"Six o'clock precisely."

Just then the overcoat on the chair caught the eye of the elder daughter.

"Monsieur," said she, "you forget your coat."

Jondrette threw a crushing glance at his daughter, accompanied by a terrible shrug of the shoulders.

M. Leblanc turned and answered with a smile:

"I do not forget it, I leave it."

"O my patron," said Jondrette, "my noble benefactor, I am melting into tears! Allow me to conduct you to your carriage."

"If you go out," replied M. Leblanc, "put on this overcoat. It is really very cold."

Jondrette did not make him say it twice. He put on the brown overcoat very quickly.

And they went out all three, Jondrette preceding the two strangers.

PRICE OF PUBLIC CABRIOLETS: TWO FRANCS AN HOUR

Marius had lost nothing of all this scene, and yet in reality he had seen nothing of it. His eyes had remained fixed upon the young girl, his heart had, so to speak, seized upon her and enveloped her entirely, from her first step into the garret.

While the young girl was opening the bundle, unfolding the clothes and the coverlids, questioning the sick mother kindly and the little injured girl tenderly, he watched all her motions, he endeavoured to hear her words. He knew her eyes, her forehead, her beauty, her stature, her gait, he did not know the sound of her voice. He thought he had caught a few words of it once at the Luxembourg, but he was not absolutely sure. He would have given ten years of his life to hear it, to be able to carry a little of that music in his soul. But all was lost in the wretched displays and trumpet blasts of Jondrette. This added a real anger to the transport of Marius. He brooded her with his eyes. He could not imagine that it really was that divine creature which he saw in the midst of the misshapen beings of this monstrous den. He seemed to see a humming-bird among toads.

When he went out, he had but one thought, to follow her, not to give up her track, not to leave her without knowing where she lived, not to lose her again, at least, after having so miraculously found her! He leaped down from the bureau and took his hat. As he was putting his hand on the bolt, and was just going out, he reflected and stopped. The hall was long, the stairs steep, Jondrette a great talker, M. Leblanc doubtless had not yet got into his carriage; if he should turn round in the passage or on the stairs, or on the doorstep, and perceive him, Marius, in that house, he would certainly be alarmed and would find means to escape him anew, and it would be all over at once. What was to be done? wait a little? but during the delay the carriage might go. Marius was perplexed. At last he took the risk and went out of his room.

There was nobody in the hall. He ran to the stairs. There was nobody on the stairs. He hurried down, and reached the boulevard in time to see a fiacre turn the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier and return into the city.

Marius rushed in that direction. When he reached the corner of the boulevard, he saw the fiacre again going rapidly down the Rue Mouffetard; the fiacre was already at a long distance, there was no means of reaching it; what should he do? run after it? impossible; and then from the carriage they would certainly notice a man running at full speed in pursuit of them, and the father would recognise him. Just at this moment, marvellous and unheard-of good fortune, Marius saw a public cab passing along the boulevard, empty. There was but one course to take, to get into this cab, and follow the fiacre. That was sure, effectual, and without danger.

Marius made a sign to the driver to stop, and cried to him:

"Right away!"

Marius had no cravat, he had on his old working coat, some of the buttons of which were missing, and his shirt was torn in one of the plaits of the bosom.

The driver stopped, winked, and reached his left hand towards Marius, rubbing his forefinger gently with his thumb.

"What?" said Marius.

"Pay in advance," said the driver.

Marius remembered that he had only sixteen sous with him.

"How much?" he asked.

"Forty sous."

"I will pay when I get back."

The driver made no reply, but to whistle an air from La Palisse and whip up his horse.

Marius saw the cab move away with a bewildered air. For the want of twenty-four sous he was losing his joy, his happiness, his love! he was falling back into night! he had seen, and he was again becoming blind. He thought bitterly, and it must indeed be said, with deep regret, of the five francs he had given that very morning to that miserable girl. Had he had those five francs he would have been saved, he would have been born again, he would have come out of limbo and darkness, he would have come out of his isolation, his spleen, his bereavement; he would have again knotted the black thread of his destiny with that beautiful golden thread which had just floated before his eyes and broken off once more! He returned to the old tenement in despair.

He might have thought that M. Leblanc had promised to return in the evening, and that he had only to take better care to follow then; but in his wrapt contemplation he had hardly understood it.

Just as he went up the stairs, he noticed on the other side of the boulevard, beside the deserted wall of the Rue de la Barrière des Gobelins, Jondrette in the "philanthropist's" overcoat, talking to one of those men of dangerous appearance, who, by common consent, are called *prowlers of the barrières;* men of equivocal faces, suspicious speech, who have an appearance of evil intentions, and who usually sleep by day, which leads us to suppose that they work by night.

These two men quietly talking while the snow was whirling about them in its fall made a picture which a policeman certainly would have observed, but which Marius hardly noticed.

Nevertheless, however mournful was the subject of his reflections, he could not help saying to himself that this prowler of the barrières with whom Jondrette was talking, resembled a certain Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, whom Courfeyrac had once pointed out to him, and who passed in the quartier for a very dangerous night-wanderer.

OFFERS OF SERVICE BY MISERY TO GRIEF

Marius mounted the stairs of the old tenement with slow steps; just as he was going into his cell, he perceived in the hall behind him the elder Jondrette girl, who was following him. This girl was odious to his sight; it was she who had his five francs, it was too late to ask her for them, the cab was there no longer, the fiacre was far away. Moreover she would not give them back to him. As to questioning her about the address of the people who had just come, that was useless; it was plain that she did not know, since the letter signed Fabantou was addressed *to the beneficent gentleman of the Church Saint Jacques du Haut Pas.*

Marius went into his room and pushed to his door behind him.

It did not close; he turned and saw a hand holding the door partly open.

"What is it?" he asked; "who is there?"

It was the Jondrette girl.

"Is it you?" said Marius almost harshly, "you again? What do you want of me?"

She seemed thoughtful and did not look at him. She had lost the assurance which she had had in the morning. She did not come in, but stopped in the dusky hall, where Marius perceived her through the half-open door.

"Come now, will you answer?" said Marius. "What is it you want of me?"

She raised her mournful eyes, in which a sort of confused light seemed to shine dimly, and said to him:

"Monsieur Marius, you look sad. What is the matter with you?"

"With me?"

"Yes, you."

"There is nothing the matter with me."

"Yes!"

"No."

"I tell you there is!"

"Let me be quiet!"

Marius pushed the door anew, she still held it back.

"Stop," said she, "you are wrong. Though you may not be rich, you were good this morning. Be so again now. You gave me something to eat, tell me now what ails you.

An idea came into Marius' mind. What straw do we despise when we feel that we are sinking.

He approached the girl.

"Listen," said he to her, kindly.

She interrupted him with a flash of joy in her eyes.

"Oh! yes, talk softly to me! I like that better."

"Well," resumed he, "you brought this old gentleman here with his daughter."

"Yes."

"Do you know their address?"

"No."

"Find it for me."

The girl's eyes, which had been gloomy, had become joyful; they now became dark.

"Is that what you want?" she asked.

She looked steadily at him.

"What will you give me?"

"Anything you wish!"

"Anything I wish?"

"Yes."

"You shall have the address."

She looked down, and then with a hasty movement closed the door.

Marius was alone.

He dropped into a chair, with his head and both elbows on the bed, swallowed up in thoughts which he could not grasp, and as if he were in a fit of vertigo. All that had taken place since morning, the appearance of the angel, her disappearance, what this poor creature had just said to him, a gleam of hope floating in an ocean of despair,—all this was confusedly crowding his brain.

Suddenly he was violently awakened from his reverie.

He heard the loud, harsh voice of Jondrette pronounce these words for him, full of the strangest interest:

"I tell you that I am sure of it, and that I recognised him!"

Of whom was Jondrette talking? he had recognised whom? M. Leblanc? the father of "his Ursula?" What! did Jondrette know him? was Marius just about to get in this sudden and unexpected way all the information the lack of which made his life obscure to himself? was he as last to know whom he loved, who that young girl was? who her father was? was the thick shadow which enveloped them to be rolled away? was the veil to be rent? Oh! heavens!

He sprang, rather than mounted, upon the bureau, and resumed his place near the little aperture in the partition.

He again saw the interior of the Jondrette den.

USE OF M. LEBLANC'S FIVE FRANC PIECE

Nothing had changed in the appearance of the family, except that the wife and daughters had opened the package, and put on the woollen stockings and underclothes. Two new coverlids were thrown over the two beds.

Jondrette had evidently just come in. He had not yet recovered his regular breathing. His daughters were sitting on the floor near the fireplace, the elder binding up the hand of the younger. His wife lay as if exhausted upon the pallet near the fireplace, with an astonished countenance. Jondrette was walking up and down the garret with rapid strides. His eyes had an extraordinary look.

The woman, who seemed timid and stricken with stupor before her husband, ventured to say to him:

"What, really? you are sure?"

"Sure! It was eight years ago! but I recognise him! Ah! I recognise him! I recognised him immediately. What! it did not strike you?"

"No."

"And yet I told you to pay attention. But it is the same height, the same face, hardly any older; there are some men who do not grow old; I don't know how they do it; it is the same tone of voice. He is better dressed, that is all! Ah! mysterious old devil, I have got you, all right!"

He checked himself, and said to his daughters:

"You go out! It is queer that it did not strike your eye."

They got up to obey.

The mother stammered out:

"With her sore hand?"

"The air will do her good," said Jondrette. "Go along."

It was clear that this man was one of those to whom there is no reply. The two girls went out.

Just as they were passing the door, the father caught the elder by the arm, and said with a peculiar tone:

"You will be here at five o'clock precisely. Both of you. I shall need you."

Marius redoubled his attention.

Alone with his wife, Jondrette began to walk the room again, and took two or three turns in his silence. Then he spent a few minutes in tucking the bottom of the woman's chemise which he wore into the waist of his trousers.

Suddenly he turned towards the woman, folded his arms, and exclaimed:

"And do you want I should tell you one thing? the young lady—"

"Well, what?" said the woman, "the young lady?"

Marius could doubt no longer, it was indeed of her that they were talking. He listened with an intense anxiety. His whole life was concentrated in his ears.

But Jondrette stooped down, and whispered to his wife. Then he straightened up and finished aloud:

"It is she!"

"That girl?" said the wife.

"That girl!" said the husband.

No words could express what there was in the *that girl* of the mother. It was surprise, rage, hatred, anger, mingled and combined in a monstrous intonation. The few words that had been spoken, some name, doubtless, which her husband had whispered in her ear, had been enough to rouse this huge drowsy woman and to change her repulsiveness to hideousness.

"Impossible!" she exclaimed, "when I think that my daughters go barefoot and have not a dress to put on! What! a satin pelisse, a velvet hat, buskins, and all! more than two hundred francs worth! one would think she was a lady! no, you are mistaken! why, in the first place she was horrid, this one is not bad! she is really not bad! it cannot be she!"

"I tell you it is she. You will see."

At this absolute affirmation, the woman raised her big red and blond face and looked at the ceiling with a hideous expression. At that moment she appeared to Marius still more terrible than her husband. She was a swine with the look of a tigress.

"What!" she resumed, "this horrible beautiful young lady who looked at my girls with an appearance of pity, can she be that beggar! Oh, I would like to stamp her heart out!"

She sprang off the bed, and remained a moment standing, her hair flying, her nostrils distended, her mouth half open, her fists clenched and drawn back. Then she fell back upon the pallet. The man still walked back and forth, paying no attention to his female.

After a few moments of silence, he approached her and stopped before her, with folded arms, as before.

"And do you want I should tell you one thing?"

"What?" she asked.

He answered in a quick and low voice:

"My fortune is made."

The woman stared at him with that look which means: Has the man who is talking to me gone crazy?

"What do you mean?" asked the woman.

He shook his head, winked and lifted his voice like a street doctor about to make a demonstration:

"What do I mean? listen!"

"Hist!" muttered the woman, "not so loud! if it means business nobody must hear."

"Pshaw! who is there to hear? our neighbour? I saw him go out just now. Besides, does he hear, the great stupid? and then I tell you that I saw him go out."

Nevertheless, by a sort of instinct, Jondrette lowered his voice, not enough however, for his words to escape Marius. A favourable circumstance, and one which enabled Marius to lose nothing of this conversation, was that the fallen snow deafened the sound of the carriages on the boulevard.

Marius heard this:

"Listen attentively. He is caught, the Crœsus! it is all right. It is already done. Everything is arranged. I have seen the men. He will come this evening at six o'clock. To bring his sixty francs, the rascal! did you see how I got that out, my sixty francs, my landlord, my 4th of February! it is not even a quarter! was that stupid! He will come then at six o'clock! our neighbour is gone to dinner then. Mother Bougon is washing dishes in the city. There is nobody in the house. Our neighbour never comes back before eleven o'clock. The girls will stand watch. You shall help us. He will be his own executor."

"And if he should not be his own executor," asked the wife.

Jondrette made a sinister gesture and said:

"We will execute him."

And he burst into a laugh.

It was the first time that Marius had seen him laugh. This laugh was cold and feeble, and made him shudder.

Jondrette opened a closet near the chimney, took out an old cap and put it on his head after brushing it with his sleeve.

"Now," said he, "I am going out. I have still some men to see. Some good ones. You will see how it is going to work. I shall be back as soon as possible, it is a great hand to play, look out for the house."

And with his two fists in the two pockets of his trousers, he stood a moment in thought, then exclaimed:

"Do you know that it is very lucky indeed that he did not recognise me? If he had been the one to recognise me he would not have come back. He would escape us! It is my beard that saved me! my romantic beard! my pretty little romantic beard!"

And he began to laugh again.

He went to the window. The snow was still falling, and blotted out the grey sky.

"What villainous weather!" said he.

Then folding his coat:

"The skin is too large. It is all the same," added he, "he did devilish well to leave it for me, the old scoundrel! Without this I should not have been able to go out and the whole thing would have been spoiled! But on what do things hang!"

And pulling his cap over his eyes, he went out.

Hardly had he had time to take a few steps in the hall, when the door opened and his tawny and cunning face again appeared.

"I forget," said he. "You will have a charcoal fire."

And he threw into his wife's apron the five-franc piece which the "philanthropist" had left him.

"A charcoal fire?" asked the woman.

"Yes."

"How many bushels?"

"Two good ones."

"That will be thirty sous. With the rest, I will buy something for dinner."

"The devil, no."

Why?"

"The piece of a hundred sous is not to be spent."

"Why?"

"Because I shall have something to buy."

"What?"

"Something."

"How much will you need?"

"Where is there a tool store near here?"

"Rue Mouffetard."

"Oh! yes, at the corner of some street; I see the shop."

"But tell me now how much you will need for what you have to buy?"

"Fifty sous or three francs."

"There won't be much left for dinner."

"Don't bother about eating to-day. There is better business."

"That is enough, my jewel."

At this word from his wife, Jondrette closed the door, and Marius heard his steps recede along the hall and go rapidly down the stairs.

Just then the clock of Saint Médard struck one.

SOLUS CUM SOLO, IN LOCO REMOTO, NON COGITABANTUR ORARE PATER NOSTER

Marius, all dreamer as he was, was, as we have said, of a firm and energetic nature. His habits of solitary meditation, while developing sympathy and compassion in him, had perhaps diminished his liability to become irritated, but left intact the faculty of indignation; he had the benevolence of a brahmin and the severity of a judge; he would have pitied a toad, but he would have crushed a viper. Now, it was into a viper's hole that he had just been looking; it was a nest of monsters that he had before his eyes.

"I must put my foot on these wretches," said he.

None of the enigmas which he hoped to see unriddled were yet cleared up; on the contrary, all had perhaps become still darker; he knew nothing more of the beautiful child of the Luxembourg or of the man whom he called M. Leblanc, except that Jondrette knew them. Across the dark words which had been uttered, he saw distinctly but one thing, that an ambuscade was preparing, an ambuscade obscure, but terrible; that they were both running a great risk, she probably, her father certainly; that he must foil the hideous combinations of the Jondrettes and break the web of these spiders.

He looked for a moment at the female Jondrette. She had pulled an old sheet-iron furnace out of a corner and she was fumbling among the old iron.

He got down from the bureau as quietly as he could, taking care to make no noise.

In the midst of his dread at what was in preparation, and the horror with which the Jondrettes had inspired him, he felt a sort of joy at the idea that it would perhaps be given to him to render so great a service to her whom he loved.

But what was he to do? warn the persons threatened? where should he find them? He did not know their address. They had reappeared to his eyes for an instant, then they had again plunged into the boundless depths of Paris. Wait at the door for M. Leblanc at six o'clock in the evening, the time when he would arrive, and warn him of the plot? But Jondrette and his men would see him watching, the place was solitary, they would be stronger than he, they would find means to seize him or get him out of the way, and he whom Marius wished to save would be lost. One o'clock had just struck, the ambuscade was to be carried out at six. Marius had five hours before him.

There was but one thing to be done.

He put on his presentable coat, tied a cravat about his neck, took his hat, and went out, without making any more noise than if he had been walking barefooted upon moss.

Besides the Jondrette woman was still fumbling over her old iron.

Once out of the house, he went to the Rue du Petit Banquier.

He was about midway of that street near a very low wall which he could have stepped over in some places and which bordered a broad field, he was walking slowly, absorbed in his thoughts as he was, and the snow deafened his steps; all at once he heard voices talking very

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HE WENT TOWARDS THE FAUBOURG SAINT MARCEAU, AND ASKED WHERE HE COULD FIND A COMMISSARY OF POLICE

near him. He turned his head, the street was empty, there was nobody in it, it was broad daylight, and yet he heard voices distinctly.

It occurred to him to look over this wall.

There were in fact two men there with their backs to the wall, seated in the snow, and talking in a low tone.

These two forms were unknown to him, one was a bearded man in a blouse, and the other a long-haired man in tatters. The bearded man had on a Greek cap, the other was bareheaded, and there was snow in his hair.

By bending his head over above them, Marius could hear.

The long-haired one jogged the other with his elbow, and said:

"With Patron-Minette, it can't fail."

"Do you think so?" said the bearded one; and the long-haired one replied:

"It will be a *fafiot* of five hundred *balles* for each of us, and the worst that can happen: five years, six years, ten years at most!"

The other answered hesitatingly, shivering under his Greek cap:

"Yes, it is a real thing. We can't go against such things."

"I tell you that the affair can't fail," replied the long-haired one. "Father What's-his-name's *maringotte* will be harnessed."

Then they began to talk about a melodrama which they had seen the evening before at La Gaîté.

Marius went on his way.

It seemed to him that the obscure words of these men, so strangely hidden behind that wall, and crouching down in the snow, were not perhaps without some connection with Jondrette's terrible projects. That must be *the affair.*

He went towards the Faubourg Saint Marceau, and asked at the first shop in his way where he could find a commissary of police.

Number 14, Rue de Pontoise, was pointed out to him.

Marius went thither.

Passing a baker's shop, he bought a two-sou loaf and ate it, foreseeing that he would have no dinner.

On his way he rendered to Providence its due. He thought that if he had not given his five francs to the Jondrette girl in the morning, he would have followed M. Leblanc's fiacre, and consequently known nothing of this, so that there would have been no obstacle to the ambuscade of the Jondrettes, and M. Leblanc would have been lost, and doubtless his daughter with him.

IN WHICH A POLICE OFFICER GIVES A LAWYER TWO FISTICUFFS

On reaching Number 14 Rue de Pontoise, he went up stairs and asked for the commissary of police.

"The commissary of police is not in," said one of the office boys; "but there is an inspector who answers for him. Would you like to speak to him? is it urgent?"

"Yes," said Marius.

The office boy introduced him into the commissary's private room. A man of tall stature was standing there, behind a railing, in front of a stove, and holding up with both hands the flaps of a huge overcoat with three capes. He had a square face, a thin and firm mouth, very fierce, bushy, greyish whiskers, and an eye that would turn your pockets inside out. You might have said of this eye, not that it penetrated, but that it ransacked.

This man's appearance was not much less ferocious or formidable than Jondrette's; it is sometimes no less startling to meet the dog than the wolf.

"What do you wish?" said he to Marius, without adding monsieur.

"The commissary of police?"

"He is absent. I answer for him."

"It is a very secret affair."

"Speak, then."

"And very urgent."

"Then speak quickly."

This man, calm and abrupt, was at the same time alarming and reassuring. He inspired fear and confidence. Marius related his adventure.—That a person whom he only knew by sight was to be drawn into an ambuscade that very evening; that occupying the room next the place, he, Marius Pontmercy, attorney, had heard the whole plot through the partition; that the scoundrel who had contrived the plot was named Jondrette; that he had accomplices, probably prowlers of the barrières, among others a certain Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille; that Jondrette's daughters would stand watch; that there was no means of warning the threatened man, as not even his name was known; and finally, that all this was to be done at six o'clock that evening, at the most desolate spot on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, in the house numbered 50–52.

At that number the inspector raised his head, and said coolly:

"It is then in the room at the end of the hall?"

"Exactly," said Marius, and he added, "Do you know that house?"

The inspector remained silent a moment, then answered, warming the heel of his boot at the door of the stove:

"It seems so."

He continued between his teeth, speaking less to Marius than to his cravat.

"There ought to be a dash of Patron-Minette in this."

That word struck Marius.

"Patron-Minette," said he. "Indeed, I heard that word pronounced."

And he related to the inspector the dialogue between the long-haired man and the bearded man in the snow behind the wall on the Rue du Petit Banquier.

The inspector muttered:

"The long-haired one must be Brujon, and the bearded one must be Demi-Liard, alias Deux-Milliards."

He had dropped his eyes again, and was considering.

"As to the Father What's-his-name, I have a suspicion of who he is. There, I have burnt my coat. They always make too much fire in these cursed stoves. Number 50–52. Old Gorbeau property."

Then he looked at Marius:

"You have seen only this bearded man and this long-haired man?"

"And Panchaud."

"You did not see a sort of little devilish rat prowling about there?"

"No."

"Nor a great, big, clumsy heap, like the elephant in the Jardin des Plantes?"

"No."

"Nor a villain who has the appearance of an old red cue?"

"No."

"As to the fourth, nobody sees him, not even his helpers, clerks, and agents. It is not very surprising that you did not see him."

"No. What are all these beings?" inquired Marius.

The inspector answered:

"And then it is not their hour."

He relapsed into silence, then resumed:

"No. 50–52. I know the shanty. Impossible to hide ourselves in the interior without the artists perceiving us, then they would leave and break up the play. They are so modest! the public annoys them. None of that, none of that. I want to hear them sing, and make them dance."

This monologue finished, he turned towards Marius and asked him, looking steadily at him:

"Will you be afraid?"

"Of what?" said Marius.

"Of these men?"

"No more than of you!" replied Marius rudely, who began to notice that this police spy had not yet called him monsieur.

The inspector looked at Marius still more steadily, and continued with a sententious solemnity:

"You speak now like a brave man and an honest man. Courage does not fear crime, and honesty does not fear authority."

Marius interrupted him:

"That is well enough; but what are you going to do?"

The inspector merely answered:

"The lodgers in that house have latch-keys to get in with at night. You must have one?"

"Yes," said Marius.

"Have you it with you?"

"Yes."

"Give it to me," said the inspector.

Marius took his key from his waistcoat, handed it to the inspector, and added:

"If you trust me, you will come in force."

The inspector threw a glance upon Marius such as Voltaire would have thrown upon a provincial academician who had proposed a rhyme to him; with a single movement he plunged both his hands, which were enormous, into the two immense pockets of his overcoat, and took out two small steel pistols, of the kind called fisticuffs. He presented them to Marius, saying hastily and abruptly:

"Take these. Go back home. Hide yourself in your room; let them think you have gone out. They are loaded. Each with two balls. You will watch; there is a hole in the wall, as you have told me. The men will come. Let them go on a little. When you deem the affair at a point, and when it is time to stop it, you will fire off a pistol. Not too soon. The rest is my affair. A pistol shot in the air, into the ceiling, no matter where. Above all, not too soon. Wait till the consummation is commenced; you are a lawyer, you know what that is."

Marius took the pistols and put them in the side pocket of his coat.

"They make a bunch that way, they show," said the inspector. "Put them in your fobs rather."

Marius hid the pistols in his fobs.

"Now," pursued the inspector, "there is not a minute to be lost by anybody. What time is it? Half past two. It is at seven?"

"Six o'clock," said Marius.

"I have time enough," continued the inspector, "but I have only enough. Forget nothing of what I have told you. Bang. A pistol shot."

"Be assured," answered Marius.

And as Marius placed his hand on the latch of the door to go out, the inspector called to him:

"By the way, if you need me between now and then, come or send here. You will ask for Inspector Javert."

IN WHICH WILL BE FOUND THE SONG TO AN ENGLISH AIR IN FASHION IN 1832

Marius sat down on his bed. It might have been half-past five o'clock. A half-hour only separated him from what was to come. He heard his arteries beat as one hears the ticking of a watch in the dark. He thought of this double march that was going on that moment in the darkness, crime advancing on the one hand, justice coming on the other. He was not afraid, but he could not think without a sort of shudder of the things which were so soon to take place. To him, as to all those whom some surprising adventure has suddenly befallen, this whole day seemed but a dream; and, to assure himself that he was not the prey of a nightmare, he had to feel the chill of the two steel pistols in his fob-pockets.

It was not now snowing; the moon, growing brighter and brighter, was getting clear of the haze, and its light, mingled with the white reflection from the fallen snow, gave the room a twilight appearance.

There was a light in the Jondrette den. Marius saw the hole in the partition shine with a red gleam which appeared to him bloody.

He was sure that this gleam could hardly be produced by a candle. However, there was no movement in their room, nobody was stirring there, nobody spoke, not a breath, the stillness was icy and deep, and save for that light he could have believed that he was beside a sepulchre.

Marius took his boots off softly, and pushed them under his bed.

Some minutes passed. Marius heard the lower door turn on its hinges; a heavy and rapid step ascended the stairs and passed along the corridor, the latch of the garret was noisily lifted; Jondrette came in.

Several voices were heard immediately. The whole family was in the garret. Only they kept silence in the absence of the master, like the cubs in the absence of the wolf.

"It is me," said he.

"Good evening, *pèremuche,*" squeaked the daughters.

"Well!" said the mother.

"All goes to a charm," answered Jondrette, "but my feet are as cold as a dog's. Good, that is right, you are dressed up. You must be able to inspire confidence."

"All ready to go out."

"You will forget nothing of what I told you! you will do the whole of it?"

"Rest assured about that."

"Because—" said Jondrette. And he did not finish his sentence.

Marius heard him put something heavy on the table. It was a chisel which he had bought.

"Ah, ha!" said Jondrette, "have you been eating here?"

"Yes," said the mother, "I have had three big potatoes and some salt. I took advantage of the fire to cook them."

"Well," replied Jondrette, "to-morrow I will take you to dine with me. There will be a duck and the accompaniments. You shall dine like Charles X.; everything is going well?"

Then he added, lowering his voice:

"The mouse-trap is open. The cats are ready."

He lowered his voice still more, and said:

"Put that into the fire."

Marius heard a sound of charcoal, as if somebody was striking it with pincers or some iron tool, and Jondrette continued:

"Have you greased the hinges of the door, so that they shall not make any noise?"

"Yes," answered the mother.

"What time is it?"

"Six o'clock, almost. The half has just struck on Saint Médard."

"The devil!" said Jondrette, "the girls must go and stand watch. Come here, you children, and listen to me."

There was a whispering.

Jondrette's voice rose again:

"Has Burgon gone out?"

"Yes," said the mother.

"Are you sure there is nobody at home in our neighbour's room?"

"He has not been back to-day, and you know that it is his dinner time."

"You are sure?"

"Sure."

"It is all the same," replied Jondrette; "there is no harm in going to see whether he is at home. Daughter, take the candle and go."

Marius dropped on his hands and knees, and crept noiselessly under the bed.

Hardly had he concealed himself, when he perceived a light through the cracks of his door.

"P'pa," cried a voice, "he has gone out."

He recognised the voice of the elder girl.

"Have you gone in?" asked the father.

"No," answered the girl, "but as his key is in his door, he has gone out."

The father cried:

"Go in just the same."

The door opened, and Marius saw the tall girl come in with a candle. She had the same appearance as in the morning, except that she was still more horrible in this light.

She walked straight towards the bed. Marius had a moment of inexpressible anxiety, but there was a mirror nailed on the wall near the bed; it was to that she was going. She stretched up on tiptoe and looked at herself in it. A sound of old iron rattling was heard in the next room.

She went to the window and looked out, speaking aloud in her half-crazy way.

"How ugly Paris is when he puts a white shirt on!" said she.

She returned to the mirror and renewed her grimaces, taking alternately front and three-quarter views of herself.

"Well," cried her father, "what are you doing now?"

"I am looking under the bed and the furniture," answered she, continuing to arrange her hair; "there is nobody here."

"Booby!" howled the father. "Here immediately, and let us lose no time."

"I am coming! I am coming!" said she. "One has no time for anything in their shanty."

She cast a last glance at the mirror, and went out, shutting the door after her.

A moment afterwards, Marius heard the sound of the bare feet of the two young girls in the passage, and the voice of Jondrette crying to them.

"Pay attention, now! one towards the barrière, the other at the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier. Don't lose sight of the house door a minute, and if you see the least thing, here immediately! tumble along! You have a key to come in with."

The elder daughter muttered:

"To stand sentry barefoot in the snow!"

"To-morrow you shall have boots of beetle colour silk!" said the father.

They went down the stairs, and, a few seconds afterwards, the sound of the lower door shutting announced that they had gone out.

USE OF MARIUS' FIVE-FRANC PIECE

Marius judged that the time had come to resume his place at his observatory. In a twinkling, and with the agility of his age, he was at the hole in the partition.

He looked in.

The interior of the Jondrette apartment presented a singular appearance, and Marius found the explanation of the strange light which he had noticed. A candle was burning in a verdigrised candlestick, but it was not that which really lighted the room. The entire den was, as it were, illuminated by the reflection of a large sheet iron furnace in the fireplace, which was filled with lighted charcoal. The fire which the female Jondrette had made ready in the daytime. The charcoal was burning and the furnace was red hot, a blue flame danced over it and helped to show the form of the chisel bought by Jondrette, which was growing ruddy among the coals. In a corner near the door, and arranged as if for anticipated use, were two heaps which appeared to be, one a heap of old iron, the other a heap of ropes. All this would have made one, who had known nothing of what was going forward, waver between a very sinister idea and a very simple idea. The room thus lighted up seemed rather a smithy than a mouth of hell; but Jondrette, in that glare, had rather the appearance of a demon than of a blacksmith.

The heat of the glowing coals was such that the candle upon the table melted on the side towards the furnace and was burning fastest on that side. An old copper dark lantern, worthy of Diogenes turned Cartouche, stood upon the mantel.

The furnace, which was set into the fireplace, beside the almost extinguished embers, sent its smoke into the flue of the chimney and exhaled no odour.

The moon, shining through the four panes of the window, threw its whiteness into the ruddy and flaming garret; and to Marius' poetic mind, a dreamer even in the moment of action, it was like a thought of heaven mingled with the shapeless nightmares of earth.

Suddenly Jondrette raised his voice:

"By the way, now, I think of it. In such weather as this he will come in a fiacre. Light the lantern, take it, and go down. You will stay there behind the lower door. The moment you hear the carriage stop, you will open immediately, he will come up, you will light him up the stairs and above the hall, and when he comes in here, you will go down again immediately, pay the driver, and send the fiacre away."

"And the money?" asked the woman.

Jondrette fumbled in his trousers and handed her five francs.

"What is that?" she exclaimed.

Jondrette answered with dignity:—

"It is the monarch which our neighbour gave this morning." And he added:—

"Do you know? we must have two chairs here."

"What for?"

"To sit in."

Marius felt a shiver run down his back on hearing the woman make this quiet reply:—

"Pardieu! I will get our neighbour's."

And with rapid movement she opened the door of the den, and went out into the hall.

Marius physically had not the time to get down from the bureau, and go and hide himself under the bed.

"Take the candle," cried Jondrette.

"No," said she, "that would bother me; I have two chairs to bring. It is moonlight."

Marius heard the heavy hand of mother Jondrette groping after his key in the dark. The door opened. He stood nailed to his place by apprehension and stupor.

The woman came in.

The gable window let in a ray of moonlight, between two great sheets of shadow. One of these sheets of shadow entirely covered the wall against which Marius was leaning, so as to conceal him.

The mother Jondrette raised her eyes, did not see Marius, took the two chairs, the only chairs which Marius had, and went out, slamming the door noisily behind her.

She went back into the den.

"Here are the two chairs."

"And here is the lantern," said the husband. "Go down quick."

She hastily obeyed, and Jondrette was left alone.

He arranged the two chairs on the two sides of the table, turned the chisel over in the fire, put an old screen in front of the fireplace, which concealed the furnace, then went to the corner where the heap of ropes was, and stooped down, as if to examine something. Marius then perceived that what he had taken for a shapeless heap, was a rope ladder, very well made, with wooden rounds, and two large hooks to hang it by.

This ladder and a few big tools, actual masses of iron, which were thrown upon the pile of old iron heaped up behind the door, were not in the Jondrette den in the morning, and had evidently been brought there in the afternoon, during Marius' absence.

"Those are smith's tools," thought Marius.

Had Marius been a little better informed in this line, he would have recognised, in what he took for smith's tools, certain instruments capable of picking a lock or forcing a door, and others capable of cutting or hacking,—the two families of sinister tools, which thieves call *cadets* and *fauchants*.

The fireplace and the table, with the two chairs, were exactly opposite Marius. The furnace was hidden; the room was now lighted only by the candle; the least thing upon the table or the mantel made a great shadow. A broken water-pitcher masked the half of one wall. There was in the room a calm which was inexpressibly hideous and threatening. The approach of some appalling thing could be felt.

Jondrette had let his pipe go out—a sure sign that he was intensely absorbed—and had come back and sat down. The candle made the savage ends and corners of his face stand out prominently. There were contractions of his brows, and abrupt openings of his right hand, as if he were replying to the last counsels of a dark interior monologue. In one of these obscure replies which he was making to himself, he drew the table drawer out quickly towards him, took out a long carving knife which was hidden there, and tried its edge on his nail. This done, he put the knife back into the drawer, and shut it.

Marius, for his part, grasped the pistol which was in his right fob pocket, took it out, and cocked it.

The pistol in cocking gave a little clear, sharp sound.

Jondrette started, and half rose from his chair.

"Who is there?" cried he.

Marius held his breath; Jondrette listened a moment, then began to laugh, saying:—

"What a fool I am? It is the partition cracking."

Marius kept the pistol in his hand.

MARIUS' TWO CHAIRS FACE EACH OTHER

Just then the distant and melancholy vibration of a bell shook the windows. Six o'clock struck on Saint Médard.

Jondrette marked each stroke with a nod of his head. At the sixth stroke, he snuffed the candle with his fingers.

Then he began to walk about the room, listened in the hall, walked, listened again: "Provided he comes!" muttered he; then he returned to his chair.

He had hardly sat down when the door opened.

The mother Jondrette had opened it, and stood in the hall making a horrible, amiable grimace, which was lighted up from beneath by one of the holes of the dark lantern.

"Walk in," said she.

"Walk in, my benefactor," repeated Jondrette, rising precipitately.

Monsieur Leblanc appeared.

He had an air of serenity which made him singularly venerable.

He laid four louis upon the table.

"Monsieur Fabantou," said he, "that is for your rent and your pressing wants. We will see about the rest."

"God reward you, my gracious benefactor!" said Jondrette, and rapidly approaching his wife:

"Send away the fiacre!"

She slipped away, while her husband was lavishing bows and offering a chair to Monsieur Leblanc. A moment afterwards she came back and whispered in his ear:

"It is done."

The snow which had been falling ever since morning, was so deep that they had not heard the fiacre arrive, and did not hear it go away.

Meanwhile Monsieur Leblanc had taken a seat.

Jondrette had taken possession of the other chair opposite Monsieur Leblanc.

Now, to form an idea of the scene which follows, let the reader call to mind the chilly night, the solitudes of La Salpêtrière covered with snow, and white in the moonlight, like immense shrouds, the flickering light of the street lamps here and there reddening these tragic boulevards and the long rows of black elms, not a passer perhaps within a mile around, the Gorbeau tenement at its deepest degree of silence, horror, and night, in that tenement, in the midst of these solitudes, in the midst of this darkness, the vast Jondrette garret lighted by a candle, and in this den two men seated at a table, Monsieur Leblanc tranquil, Jondrette smiling and terrible, his wife, the wolf dam, in a corner, and, behind the partition, Marius, invisible, alert, losing no word, losing no movement, his eye on the watch, the pistol in his grasp.

Marius, moreover, was experiencing nothing but an emotion of horror, no fear. He clasped the butt of the pistol, and felt reassured. "I shall stop this wretch when I please," thought he.

He felt that the police was somewhere near by in ambush, awaiting the signal agreed upon, and all ready to stretch out its arm.

He hoped, moreover, that from this terrible meeting between Jondrette and Monsieur Leblanc some light would be thrown upon all that he was interested to know.

THE DISTRACTIONS OF DARK CORNERS

No sooner was Monsieur Leblanc seated than he turned his eyes towards the empty pallets.

"How does the poor little injured girl do?" he inquired.

"Badly," answered Jondrette with a doleful yet grateful smile, "very badly, my worthy monsieur. Her eldest sister has taken her to the Bourbe to have her arm dressed. You will see them, they will be back directly."

"Madame Fabantou appears to me much better?" resumed Monsieur Leblanc, casting his eyes upon the grotesque accoutrement of the female Jondrette, who, standing between him and the door, as if she were already guarding the exit, was looking at him in a threatening and almost a defiant posture.

"She is dying," said Jondrette. "But you see, monsieur! she has so much courage, that woman! She is not a woman, she is an ox."

The woman, touched by the compliment, retorted with the smirk of a flattered monster:

"You are always too kind to me, Monsieur Jondrette."

"Jondrette!" said M. Leblanc. "I thought that your name was Fabantou?"

"Fabantou or Jondrette!" replied the husband hastily. "Sobriquet as an artist!"

And, directing a shrug of the shoulders towards his wife, which M. Leblanc did not see, he continued with an emphatic and caressing tone of voice:

"Ah! how well we have always got along together, this poor dear and I? What would be left to us, if it were not for that? We are so unfortunate, my respected monsieur! We have arms, no labour! We have courage, no work! I do not know how the government arranges it, but, upon my word of honour, I am no Jacobin, monsieur, I am a brawler, I wish them no harm, but if I were the ministers, upon my most sacred word, it would go differently.

While Jondrette was talking, with an apparent disorder which detracted nothing from the crafty and cunning expression of his physiognomy, Marius raised his eyes, and perceived at the back of the room somebody whom he had not before seen. A man had come in so noiselessly that nobody had heard the door turn on its hinges. This man had a knit woollen waistcoat of violet colour, old, worn-out, stained, cut, and showing gaps at all its folds, full trousers of cotton velvet, socks on his feet, no shirt, his neck bare, his arms bare and tattooed, and his face stained black. He sat down in silence and with folded arms on the nearest bed, and as he kept behind the woman, he was distinguished only with difficulty.

That kind of magnetic instinct which warns the eye made M. Leblanc turn almost at the same time with Marius. He could not help a movement of surprise, which did not escape Jondrette:

"Ah! I see!" exclaimed Jondrette, buttoning up his coat with a complacent air, "you are looking at your overcoat. It's a fit! my faith, it's a fit!"

"Who is that man?" said M. Leblanc.

"That man?" said Jondrette, "that is a neighbour. Pay no attention to him."

The neighbour had a singular appearance. However, factories of chemical products abound in the Faubourg Saint Marceau. Many machinists might have their faces blacked. The whole person of M. Leblanc, moreover, breathed a candid and intrepid confidence. He resumed:

"Pardon me; what were you saying to me, Monsieur Fabantou?"

"I was telling you, monsieur and dear patron," replied Jondrette, leaning his elbows on the table, and gazing at M. Leblanc with fixed and tender eyes, similar to the eyes of a boa constrictor, "I was telling you that I had a picture to sell."

A slight noise was made at the door. A second man entered, and sat down on the bed behind the female Jondrette. He had his arms bare, like the first, and a mask of ink or of soot.

Although this man had, literally, slipped into the room, he could not prevent M. Leblanc from perceiving him.

"Do not mind them," said Jondrette. "They are people of the house. I was telling you, then, that I have a valuable painting left. Here, monsieur, look."

He got up, went to the wall, at the foot of which stood the panel of which we have spoken, and turned it round, still leaving it resting against the wall. It was something, in fact, that resembled a picture, and which the candle scarcely revealed. Marius could make nothing out of it, Jondrette being between him and the picture; he merely caught a glimpse of a coarse daub, with a sort of principal personage, coloured in the crude and glaring style of strolling panoramas and paintings upon screens.

"What is that?" asked M. Leblanc.

Jondrette exclaimed:

"A painting by a master; a picture of great price, my benefactor! I cling to it as to my two daughters, it calls up memories to me! but I have told you, and I cannot unsay it, I am so unfortunate that I would part with it."

Whether by chance, or whether there was some beginning of distrust, while examining the picture, M. Leblanc glanced towards the back of the room. There were now four men there, three seated on the bed, one standing near the door-casing; all four bare-armed, motionless, and with blackened faces. One of those who were on the bed was leaning against the wall, with his eyes closed, and one would have said he was asleep. This one was old; his white hair over his black face was horrible. The two others appeared young; one was bearded, the other had long hair. None of them had shoes on; those who did not have socks were barefooted.

Jondrette noticed that M. Leblanc's eye was fixed upon these men.

"They are friends. They live near by," said he. "They are dark because they work in charcoal. They are chimney doctors. Do not occupy your mind with them, my benefactor, but buy my picture. Take pity on my misery. I shall not sell it to you at a high price. How much do you estimate it worth?"

"But," said M. Leblanc, looking Jondrette full in the face and like a man who puts himself on his guard, "this is some tavern sign, it is worth about three francs."

Jondrette answered calmly:

"Have you your pocket-book here? I will be satisfied with a thousand crowns."

M. Leblanc rose to his feet, placed his back to the wall, and ran his eye rapidly over the room. He had Jondrette at his left on the side towards the window, and his wife and the four men at his right on the side towards the door. The four men did not stir, and had not even the appearance of seeing him; Jondrette had begun again to talk in a plaintive key, with his eye so wild and his tones so mournful, that M. Leblanc might have thought that he had before his eyes nothing more nor less than a man gone crazy from misery.

While speaking Jondrette did not look at M. Leblanc, who was watching him. M. Leblanc's eye was fixed upon Jondrette, and Jondrette's eye upon the door. Marius' breathless attention went from one to the other. M. Leblanc appeared to ask himself, "Is this an idiot?" Jondrette repeated two or three times with all sorts of varied inflections in the drawling and begging style: "I can only throw myself into the river! I went down three steps for that the other day by the side of the bridge of Austerlitz!"

Suddenly his dull eye lighted up with a hideous glare, this little man straightened up and became horrifying, he took a step towards M. Leblanc and cried to him in a voice of thunder:

"But all that is not the question! do you know me?"

THE AMBUSCADE

The door of the garret had been suddenly flung open, disclosing three men in blue blouses with black paper masks. The first was spare and had a long iron-bound cudgel; the second, who was a sort of colossus, held by the middle of the handle, with the axe down, a butcher's pole-axe. The third, a broad-shouldered man, not so thin as the first, nor so heavy as the second, held in his clenched fists an enormous key stolen from some prison door.

It appeared that it was the arrival of these men for which Jondrette was waiting. A rapid dialogue commenced between him and the man with the cudgel, the spare man.

"Is everything ready?" said Jondrette.

"Yes," answered the spare man.

"Where is Montparnasse then?"

"The young primate stopped to chat with your daughter."

"Which one?"

"The elder."

"Is there a fiacre below?"

"Yes."

"The *maringotte* is ready?"

"Ready."

"With two good horses?"

"Excellent."

"It is waiting where I said it should wait?"

"Yes."

"Good," said Jondrette.

M. Leblanc was very pale. He looked over everything in the room about him like a man who understands into what he has fallen, and his head, directed in turn towards all the heads which surrounded him, moved on his neck with an attentive and astonished slowness, but there was nothing in his manner which resembled fear. He had made an extemporised intrenchment of the table; and this man who, the moment before, had the appearance only of a good old man, had suddenly become a sort of athlete, and placed his powerful fist upon the back of his chair with a surprising and formidable gesture.

This old man, so firm and so brave before so great a peril, seemed to be one of those natures who are courageous as they are good, simply and naturally. The father of a woman that we love is never a stranger to us. Marius felt proud of this unknown man.

Three of the men of whom Jondrette had said: they are *chimney doctors,* had taken from the heap of old iron, one a large pair of shears, another a steelyard bar, the third a hammer, and placed themselves before the door without saying a word. The old man was still on the bed, and had merely opened his eyes. The woman Jondrette was sitting beside him.

Marius thought that in a few seconds more the time would come to interfere, and he raised his right hand towards the ceiling, in the direction of the hall, ready to let off his pistol-shot.

Jondrette, after his colloquy with the man who had the cudgel, turned again towards M. Leblanc and repeated his question, accompanying it with that low, smothered, and terrible laugh of his:

"You do not recognise me, then?"

M. Leblanc looked him in the face, and answered:

"No."

Then Jondrette came up to the table. He leaned forward over the candle, folding his arms, and pushing his angular and ferocious jaws up towards the calm face of M. Leblanc, as nearly as he could without forcing him to draw back, and in that posture, like a wild beast just about to bite, he cried:

"My name is not Fabantou, my name is not Jondrette, my name is Thénardier! I am the innkeeper at Montfermeil! do you understand me? Thénardier! now do you know me?"

An imperceptible flush passed over M. Leblanc's forehead, and he answered without tremor or elevation of voice, and with his usual placidness:

"No more than before."

Marius did not hear this answer. Could anybody have seen him at that moment in that darkness, he would have seen that he was haggard, astounded, and thunderstruck. When Jondrette had said: *My name is Thénardier,* Marius had trembled in every limb, and supported himself against the wall as if he had felt the chill of a sword-blade through his heart. Then his right arm, which was just ready to fire the signal shot, dropped slowly down, and at the moment that Jondrette had repeated: *Do you understand me, Thénardier?* Marius' nerveless fingers had almost dropped the pistol. Jondrette, in unveiling who he was, had not moved M. Leblanc, but he had completely unnerved Marius. That name of Thénardier, which M. Leblanc did not seem to know, Marius knew. Remember what that name was to him! that name he had worn on his heart, written in his father's will! he carried it in the innermost place of his thoughts, in the holiest spot of his memory, in that sacred command: "A man named Thénardier saved my life. If my son should meet him, he will do him all the good he can." That name, we remember, was one of the devotions of his soul; he mingled it with the name of his father in his worship. What! here was Thénardier, here was that Thénardier, here was that innkeeper of Montfermeil, for whom he had so long and so vainly sought! He had found him at last, and how? this saviour of his father was a bandit! this man, to whom he, Marius, burned to devote himself, was a monster! this deliverer of Colonel Pontmercy was in the actual commission of a crime, the shape of which Marius did not see very distinctly, but which looked like an assassination! and upon whom, Great God! what a fatality! what a bitter mockery of Fate! His father from the depths of his coffin commanded him to do all the good he could to Thénardier; for four years Marius had had no other thought than to acquit this debt of his father, and the moment that he was about to cause a brigand to be seized by justice, in the midst of a crime, destiny called to him: that is Thénardier! his father's life, saved in a storm of grape upon the heroic field of Waterloo, he was at last about to reward this man for, and to reward him with the scaffold! He had resolved, if ever he found this Thénardier, to accost him in no other wise than by throwing himself at his feet, and now he found him indeed, but to deliver him to the executioner! his father said to him: Aid Thénardier! and he was answering that adored and holy voice by crushing Thénardier! presenting as a spectacle to his father in his tomb, the man who had snatched him from death at the peril of his life, executed in the Place St. Jaques by the act of his son, this Marius to whom he had bequeathed this man! And what a mockery to have worn so long upon his breast the last wishes of his father, written by his hand, only to act so frightfully contrary to them! but on the other hand, to see this ambuscade and not prevent it! to condemn the victim and spare the assassin, could he be bound to any gratitude towards such a wretch? all the ideas which Marius had had for the last four years were, as it were, pierced through and through by this unexpected blow. He shuddered. Everything depends upon him. He held in his hand, they all unconscious, those beings who were moving there before his eyes. If he fired the pistol, M. Leblanc was saved and Thénardier was lost; if he did not, M. Leblanc was sacrificed, and, perhaps, Thénardier escaped. To hurl down the one, or to let the other fall! remorse on either hand. What was to be done? which should he choose? be wanting to his most imperious memories, to so many deep resolutions, to his most sacred duty, to that most venerated paper! be wanting to his father's will, or suffer a crime to be accomplished? He seemed on the one hand to hear "his Ursula" entreating him for her father, and on the other the colonel commending Thénardier to him. He felt that he was mad. His knees gave way beneath him; and he had not even time to deliberate, with such fury was the scene which he had before his eyes rushing forward. It was like a whirlwind, which he had thought himself master of, and which was carrying him away. He was on the point of fainting.

Meanwhile Thénardier, we will call him by no other name henceforth, was walking to and fro before the table in a sort of bewilderment and frenzied triumph.

He clutched the candle and put it on the mantel with such a shock that the flame was almost extinguished and the tallow was spattered upon the wall.

Then he turned towards M. Leblanc, and with a frightful look, spit out this:

"Singed! smoked! basted! spitted!"

And he began to walk again, in full explosion.

"Ha!" cried he, "I have found you again at last, monsieur philanthropist! monsieur threadbare millionaire! monsieur giver of dolls! old marrow-bones! ha! you do not know me? no, it was not you who came to Montfermeil, to my inn, eight years ago, the night of Christmas, 1832! it was not you who took away Fantine's child from my house! the Lark! it was not you who had a yellow coat! no! and a package of clothes in your hand just as you came here this morning! say now, wife! it is his mania it appears, to carry packages of woollen stockings into houses! old benevolence, get out! Are you a hosier, monsieur millionaire? you give the poor your shop sweepings, holy man! what a charlatan! Ha! you do not know me? Well, I knew you! I knew you immediately as soon as you stuck your nose in here. Ah! you are going to find out at last that it is not all roses to go into people's houses like that, under pretext of their being inns, with worn-out clothes, with the appearance of a pauper, to whom anybody would have given a sou, to deceive persons, to act the generous, take their help away, and threaten them in the woods, and that you do not get quit of it by bringing back afterwards, when people are ruined, an overcoat that is too large and two paltry hospital coverlids, old beggar, child-stealer!"

Thénardier stopped. He was out of breath. His little narrow chest was blowing like a blacksmith's bellows. His eye was full of the base delight of a feeble, cruel, and cowardly animal, which can finally prostrate that of which it has stood in awe, and insult what it has flattered, the joy of a dwarf putting his heel upon the head of Goliath, the joy of a jackal beginning to tear a sick bull, dead enough not to be able to defend himself, alive enough yet to suffer.

M. Leblanc did not interrupt him but said when he stopped:

"I do not know what you mean. You are mistaken. I am a very poor man and anything but a millionaire. I do not know you; you mistake me for another."

"Ha!" screamed Thénardier, "good mountebank! You stick to that joke yet! You are in the fog, my old boy! Ah! you do not remember! You do not see who I am!"

"Pardon me, monsieur," answered M. Leblanc, with a tone of politeness which, at such a moment, had a peculiarly strange and powerful effect, "I see that you are a bandit."

Who has not noticed it, hateful beings have their tender points;

monsters are easily annoyed. At this word bandit, the Thénardiess sprang off her bed. Thénardier seized his chair as if he were going to crush it in his hands: "Don't you stir," cried he to his wife, and turning towards M. Leblanc:

"Bandit! Yes, I know that you call us so, you rich people! Yes! it is true I have failed; I am in concealment, I have no bread; I have not a sou, I am a bandit! Here are three days that I have eaten nothing, I am a bandit!"

Here Thénardier took a step towards the men who were before the door and added with a shudder:

"When I think that he dares to come and talk to me, as if I were a cobbler!"

Then addressing M. Leblanc with a fresh burst of frenzy:

"And know this, too, monsieur philanthropist! I am no doubtful man. I am not a man whose name nobody knows, and who comes into houses to carry off children. I am an old French soldier; I ought to be decorated. I was at Waterloo, I was, and in that battle I saved a general, named the Comte de Pontmercy. This picture which you see, and which was painted by David at Bruqueselles, do you know who it represents? It represents me. David desired to immortalise that feat of arms. I have General Pontmercy on my back, and I am carrying him through the storm of grape. That is history. He has never done anything at all for me, this general; he is no better than other people. But, nevertheless, I saved his life at the risk of my own, and I have my pockets full of certificates. I am a soldier of Waterloo—name of a thousand names! And now that I have had the goodness to tell you all this, let us make an end of it; I must have some money; I must have a good deal of money, I must have an immense deal of money, or I will exterminate you, by the thunder of God!"

Marius had regained some control over his distress, and was listening. The last possibility of doubt had now vanished. It was indeed the Thénardier of the will. Marius shuddered at that reproach of ingratitude flung at his father, and which he was on the point of justifying so fatally. His perplexities were redoubled. Moreover, there was in all these words of Thénardier, in his tone, in his gestures, in his look which flashed out flames at every word, there was in this explosion of an evil nature exposing its entire self, in this mixture of braggadocio and abjectness, of pride and pettiness, of rage and folly in this chaos of real grievances and false sentiments, in this shamelessness of a wicked man tasting the sweetness of violence, in this brazen nakedness of a deformed soul, in this conflagration of every suffering combined with every hatred, something which was as hideous as evil and as sharp and bitter as the truth.

The picture by a master, the purchase of which he had proposed to M. Leblanc, was, the reader has guessed, nothing more than the sign of his chop-house, the only relic which he had saved from his shipwreck at Montfermeil.

As he had ceased to intercept Marius' line of vision, Marius could now look at the thing, and in this daub he really made out a battle, a background of smoke, and one man carrying off another. It was the group of Thénardier and Pontmercy; the saviour sergeant, the colonel saved. Marius was as it were intoxicated; this picture in some sort restored his father to life; it was not now the sign of the Montfermeil inn, it was a resurrection; in it a tomb half opened, from it a phantom arose. Marius heard his heart ring in his temples, he had the cannon of Waterloo sounding in his ears; his bleeding father dimly painted upon this dusky panel startled him, and it seemed to him that that shapeless shadow was gazing steadily upon him.

When Thénardier had taken breath he fixed his bloodshot eyes upon Monsieur Leblanc, and said in a low and abrupt tone:

"What have you to say before we begin to dance with you?"

Monsieur Leblanc said nothing. In the midst of this silence a hoarse voice threw in this ghastly sarcasm from the hall:

"If there is any wood to split, I am on hand!"

It was the man with the pole-axe who was making merry.

At the same time a huge face, bristly and dirty, appeared in the doorway, with a hideous laugh, which showed not teeth, but fangs.

It was the face of the man with the pole-axe.

"What have you taken off your mask for?" cried Thénardier, furiously.

"To laugh," replied the man.

For some moments, Monsieur Leblanc had seemed to follow and to watch all the movements of Thénardier, who, blinded and bewildered by his own rage, was walking to and fro in the den with the confidence inspired by the feeling that the door was guarded, having armed possession of a disarmed man, and being nine to one, even if the Thénardiess should count for but one man. In his apostrophe to the man with the pole-axe, he turned his back to Monsieur Leblanc.

Monsieur Leblanc seized this opportunity, pushed the chair away with his foot, the table with his hand, and at one bound, with a marvellous agility, before Thénardier had had time to turn around, he was at the window. To open it, get up and step through it, was the work of a second. He was half outside when six strong hands seized him, and drew him forcibly back into the room. The three "chimney doctors" had thrown themselves upon him. At the same time the Thénardiess had clutched him by the hair.

At the disturbance which this made, the other bandits ran in from the hall. The old man, who was on the bed, and who seemed overwhelmed with wine, got off the pallet, and came tottering along with a road-mender's hammer in his hand.

One of the "chimney doctors," whose blackened face was lighted up by the candle, and in whom Marius, in spite of this colouring, recognised Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, raised a sort of loaded club made of a bar of iron with a knob of lead at each end, over Monsieur Leblanc's head.

Marius could not endure this sight. "Father," thought he, "pardon me!" And his finger sought the trigger of the pistol. The shot was just about to be fired, when Thénardier's voice cried:

"Do him no harm!"

This desperate attempt of the victim, far from exasperating Thénardier, had calmed him. There were two men in him, the ferocious man and the crafty man. Up to this moment, in the first flush of triumph, before his prey stricken down and motionless, the ferocious man had been predominant; when the victim resisted, and seemed to desire a struggle, the crafty man reappeared and resumed control.

"Do him no harm!" he repeated, and without suspecting it, the first result of this was to stop the pistol which was just ready to go off, and paralyse Marius, to whom the urgency seemed to disappear, and who, in view of this new phase of affairs, saw no impropriety in waiting longer. Who knows but some chance may arise which will save him from the fearful alternative of letting the father of Ursula perish, or destroying the saviour of the colonel!

A herculean struggle had commenced. With one blow full in the chest M. Leblanc had sent the old man sprawling into the middle of the room, then with two back strokes had knocked down two other assailants, whom he held one under each knee; the wretches screamed under the pressure as if they had been under a granite mill-stone; but the four others had seized the formidable old man by the arms and the back, and held him down over the two prostrate "chimney doctors." Thus, master of the latter and mastered by the former, crushing those below him and suffocating under those above him, vainly endeavouring to shake off all the violence and blows which were heaped upon him, M. Leblanc disappeared under the horrible group of the bandits, like a wild boar under a howling pack of hounds and mastiffs.

They succeeded in throwing him over upon the bed nearest to the window, and held him there in awe. The Thénardiess had not let go of his hair.

"Here," said Thénardier, "let it alone. You will tear your shawl."

The Thénardiess obeyed, as the she-wolf obeys her mate, with a growl.

"Now, the rest of you," continued Thénardier, "search him."

M. Leblanc seemed to have given up all resistance. They searched him. There was nothing upon him but a leather purse which contained six francs, and his handkerchief.

Thénardier put the handkerchief in his pocket.

"What! no pocket-book?" he asked.

Nor any watch," answered one of the "chimney doctors."

"It is all the same," muttered, with the voice of a ventriloquist, the masked man who had the big key, "he is an old rough."

Thénardier went to the corner by the door and took a bundle of ropes which he threw to them.

"Tie him to the foot of the bed," said he, and perceiving the old fellow who lay motionless, when he was stretched across the room by the blow of M. Leblanc's fist:

"Is Boulatruelle dead?" asked he.

"No," answered Bigrenaille, "he is drunk."

"Sweep him into a corner," said Thénardier.

Two of the "chimney doctors" pushed the drunkard up to the heap of old iron with their feet.

"Babet, what did you bring so many for?" said Thénardier in a low tone to the man with the cudgel, "it is needless."

"What would you have?" replied the man with the cudgel, "they all wanted to be in. The season is bad. There is nothing doing."

The pallet upon which M. Leblanc had been thrown was a sort of hospital bed supported by four big roughly squared wooden posts. M. Leblanc made no resistance. The brigands bound him firmly, standing, with his feet to the floor, by the bed-post furthest from the window and nearest to the chimney.

When the last knot was tied, Thénardier took a chair and came and sat down nearly in front of M. Leblanc. Thénardier looked no longer like himself, in a few seconds the expression of his face had passed from unbridled violence to tranquil and crafty mildness. Marius hardly recognized in that polite, clerkly smile, the almost beastly mouth which was foaming a moment before; he looked with astonishment upon this fantastic and alarming metamorphosis, and he experienced what a man would feel who should see a tiger change itself into an attorney.

"Monsieur," said Thénardier.

And with a gesture dismissing the brigands who still had their hands upon M. Leblanc:

"Move off a little, and let me talk with monsieur."

They all retired towards the door. He resumed:

"Monsieur, you were wrong in trying to jump out the window. You might have broken your leg. Now, if you please, we will talk quietly. In the first place I must inform you of a circumstance I have noticed, which is that you have not yet made the least outcry."

Thénardier was right; this incident was true, although it had escaped Marius in his anxiety. M. Leblanc had only uttered a few words without raising his voice, and, even in his struggle by the window with the six bandits, he had preserved the most profound and the most remarkable silence. Thénardier continued:

"Indeed! you might have cried thief a little, for I should not have found it inconvenient. Murder! that is said upon occasion, and, as far as I am concerned, I should not have taken it in bad part. It is very natural that one should make a little noise when he finds himself with persons who do not inspire him with as much confidence as they might; you might have done it, and we should not have disturbed you. We would not even have gagged you. And I will tell you why. It is because this room is very deaf. That is all I can say for it, but I can say that. It is a cave. We could fire a bomb here, and at the nearest guardhouse it would sound like a drunkard's snore. Here a cannon would go boom, and thunder would go puff. It is a convenient apartment. But, in short, you did not cry out, that was better, I make you my compliments for it, and I will tell you what I conclude from it: my dear monsieur, when a man cries out, who is it that comes? The police. And after the police? Justice. Well! you did not cry out; because you were no more anxious than we to see justice and the police come. It is because,—I suspected as much long ago,—you have some interest in concealing something. For our part we have the same interest. Now we can come to an understanding."

While speaking thus, it seemed as though Thénardier, with his gaze fixed upon Monsieur Leblanc, was endeavouring to thrust the daggers which he looked, into the very conscience of his prisoner. His language, moreover, marked by a sort of subdued and sullen insolence, was reserved and almost select, and in this wretch who was just before nothing but a brigand, one could now perceive the man who studied to be a priest.

The silence which the prisoner had preserved, this precaution which he had carried even to the extent of endangering his life, the resistance to the first impulse of nature, which is to utter a cry, all this, it must be said, since it had been remarked, was annoying to Marius, and painfully astonished him.

The observation of Thénardier, well founded as it was, added in Marius' eyes still more to the obscurity of the mysterious cloud that enveloped this strange and serious face to which Courfeyrac had given the nickname of Monsieur Leblanc. But whatever he might be, bound with ropes, surrounded by assassins, half buried, so to speak, in a grave which was deepening beneath him every moment, before the fury as well as before the mildness of Thénardier, this man remained impassible; and Marius could not repress at such a moment his admiration for that superbly melancholy face.

Here was evidently a soul inaccessible to fear, and ignorant of dismay. Here was one of those men who are superior to astonishment in desperate situations. However extreme the crisis, however inevitable the catastrophe, there was nothing there of the agony of the drowning man, staring with horrified eyes as he sinks to the bottom.

Thénardier quietly got up, went to the fireplace, took away the screen which he leaned against the nearest pallet, and thus revealed the furnace full of glowing coals in which the prisoner could plainly see the chisel at a white heat, spotted here and there with little scarlet stars.

Then Thénardier came back and sat down by Monsieur Leblanc.

"I continue," said he. "Now we can come to an understanding. Let us arrange this amicably. I was wrong to fly into a passion just now. I do not know where my wits were, I went much too far, I talked extravagantly. For instance, because you are a millionaire, I told you that I wanted money, a good deal of money, an immense deal of money. That would not be reasonable. My God, rich as you may be, you have your expenses; who does not have them? I do not want to ruin you, I am not a catch-poll, after all. I am not one of those people who, because they have the advantage in position, use it to be ridiculous. Here, I am willing to go half way and make some sacrifice on my part. I need only two hundred thousand francs."

Monsieur Leblanc did not breathe a word. Thénardier went on:

"You see that I water my wine pretty well. I do not know the state of your fortune, but I know that you do not care much for money, and a benevolent man like you can certainly give two hundred thousand francs to a father of a family who is unfortunate. Certainly you are reasonable also, you do not imagine that I would take the trouble I have to-day, and that I would organise the affair of this evening, which is a very fine piece of work, in the opinion of these gentlemen, to end off by asking you for enough to go and drink fifteen sou red wine and eat veal at Desnoyers'. Two hundred thousand francs, it is worth it. That trifle once out of your pocket, I assure you that all is said, and that you need not fear a snap of the finger. You will say: but I have not two hundred thousand francs with me. Oh! I am not exacting. I do not require that. I only ask one thing. Have the goodness to write what I shall dictate."

Here Thénardier paused, then he added, emphasising each word and casting a smile towards the furnace:

"I give you notice that I shall not admit that you cannot write."

A grand inquisitor might have envied that smile.

Thénardier pushed the table close up to Monsieur Leblanc, and took the inkstand, a pen, and a sheet of paper from the drawer, which he left partly open, and from which gleamed the long blade of the knife.

He laid the sheet of paper before Monsieur Leblanc.

"Write," said he.

The prisoner spoke at last:

"How do you expect me to write? I am tied."

"That is true, pardon me!" said Thénardier, "you are quite right."

And turning towards Bigrenaille:

"Untie monsieur's right arm."

Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, executed Thénardier's order. When the prisoner's right hand was free, Thénardier dipped the pen into the ink, and presented it to him.

"Remember, monsieur, that you are in our power, at our discretion, that no human power can take you away from here, and that we should be really grieved to be obliged to proceed to unpleasant extremities. I know neither your name nor your address, but I give you notice that you will remain tied until the person whose duty it will be to carry the letter which you are about to write, has returned. Have the kindness now to write."

"What?" asked the prisoner.

"I will dictate."

M. Leblanc took the pen.

Thénardier began to dictate:

"My daughter—"

The prisoner shuddered and lifted his eyes to Thénardier.

"Put 'my dear daughter,'" said Thénardier. M. Leblanc obeyed. Thénardier continued:

"Come immediately—"

He stopped.

"You call her daughter, do you not?"

"Who?" asked M. Leblanc.

"Zounds!" said Thénardier, "the little girl, the Lark."

M. Leblanc answered without the least apparent emotion:

"I do not know what you mean."

"Well, go on," said Thénardier, and he began to dictate again.

"Come immediately, I have imperative need of you. The person who will give you this note is directed to bring you to me. I am waiting for you. Come with confidence."

M. Leblanc had written the whole. Thénardier added:

"Ah! strike out *come with confidence,* that might lead her to suppose that the thing is not quite clear and that distrust is possible."

M. Leblanc erased the three words.

"Now," continued Thénardier, "sign it. What is your name?"

The prisoner laid down the pen and asked:

"For whom is this letter?"

"You know very well," answered Thénardier, "for the little girl, I have just told you."

It was evident that Thénardier avoided naming the young girl in question. He said "the Lark," he said "the little girl," but he did not pronounce the name. The precaution of a shrewd man preserving his own secret before his accomplices. To speak the name would have been to give up the whole "affair" to them, and to tell them more than they needed to know.

He resumed:

"Sign it. What is your name?"

"Urbain Fabre," said the prisoner.

Thénardier, with the movement of a cat, thrust his hand into his pocket and pulled out the handkerchief taken from M. Leblanc. He looked for the mark upon it and held it up to the candle.

"U. F. That is it. Urbain Fabre. Well, sign U. F."

The prisoner signed.

"As it takes two hands to fold the letter, give it to me, I will fold it."

This done, Thénardier resumed:

"Put on the address, *Mademoiselle Fabre,* at your house. I know that you live not very far from here, in the neighbourhood of Saint Jacques du Haut Pas, since you go there to mass every day, but I do not know in what street. I see that you understand your situation. As you have not lied about your name, you will not lie about your address. Put it on yourself."

The prisoner remained thoughtful for a moment, then he took the pen and wrote:

"Mademoiselle Fabre, at Monsieur Urbain Fabre's, Rue Saint Dominique d'Enfer, No. 17."

Thénardier seized the letter with a sort of feverish convulsive movement.

"Wife!" cried he.

The Thénardiess sprang forward.

"Here is the letter. You know what you have to do. There is a fiacre below. Go right away, and come back ditto."

And addressing the man with the pole-axe:

"Here, since you have taken off your hide-your-nose, go with the woman. You will get up behind the fiacre. You know where you left the *maringotte*."

"Yes," said the man.

And, laying down his pole-axe in a corner, he followed the Thénardiess.

As they were going away, Thénardier put his head through the half-open door and screamed into the hall:

"Above all things do not lose the letter! remember that you have two hundred thousand francs with you."

The harsh voice of the Thénardiess answered:

"Rest assured, I have put it in my bosom."

A minute had not passed when the snapping of a whip was heard, which grew fainter and rapidly died away.

"Good!" muttered Thénardier. "They are going good speed. At that speed the bourgeoise will be back in three quarters of an hour."

He drew a chair near the fireplace and sat down, folding his arms and holding his muddy boots up to the furnace.

"My feet are cold," said he.

There were now but five bandits left in the den with Thénardier and the prisoner. These men, through the masks or the black varnish which covered their faces and made of them, as fear might suggest, charcoal men, negroes, or demons, had a heavy and dismal appearance, and one felt that they would execute a crime as they would any drudgery, quietly, without anger and without mercy, with a sort of irksomeness. They were heaped together in a corner like brutes, and were silent. Thénardier was warming his feet. The prisoner had relapsed into his taciturnity. A gloomy stillness had succeeded the savage tumult which filled the garret a few moments before.

The candle, in which a large thief had formed, hardly lighted up the enormous den, the fire had grown dull, and all their monstrous heads made huge shadows on the walls and on the ceiling.

No sound could be heard save the quiet breathing of the drunken old man, who was asleep.

Marius was waiting in an anxiety which everything increased. The riddle was more impenetrable than ever. Who was this "little girl," whom Thénardier had also called the Lark? was it his "Ursula?" The prisoner had not seemed to be moved by this word, the Lark, and answered in the most natural way in the world: I do not know what you mean. On the other hand, the two letters U. F. were explained; it was Urbain Fabre, and Ursula's name was no longer Ursula. This Marius saw most clearly. A sort of hideous fascination held him spellbound to the place from which he observed and commanded this whole scene. There he was, almost incapable of reflection and motion, as if annihilated by such horrible things in so close proximity. He was waiting, hoping for some movement, no matter what, unable to collect his ideas and not knowing what course to take.

"At all events," said he, "if the Lark is she, I shall certainly see her, for the Thénardiess is going to bring her here. Then all will be plain. I will give my blood and my life if need be, but I will deliver her. Nothing shall stop me."

Nearly half an hour passed thus. Thénardier appeared absorbed in a dark meditation, the prisoner did not stir. Nevertheless Marius thought he had heared at intervals and for some moments a little dull noise from the direction of the prisoner.

Suddenly Thénardier addressed the prisoner:

"Monsieur Fabre, here, so much let me tell you at once."

These few words seemed to promise a clearing up. Marius listened closely. Thénardier continued:

"My spouse is coming back, do not be impatient. I think the Lark is really your daughter, and I find it quite natural that you should keep her. But listen a moment; with your letter, my wife is going to find her. I told my wife to dress up, as you saw, so that your young lady would follow her without hesitation. They will both get into the fiacre with my comrade behind. There is somewhere outside one of the barriers a *maringotte* with two very good horses harnessed. They will take your young lady there. She will get out of the carriage. My comrade will get into the maringotte with her, and my wife will come back here to tell us: 'It is done.' As to your young lady, no harm will be done her; the *maringotte* will take her to a place where she will be quiet, and as soon as you have given me the little two hundred thousand francs, she will be sent back to you. If you have me arrested, my comrade will give the Lark a pinch, that is all."

The prisoner did not utter a word. After a pause, Thénardier continued:

"It is very simple, as you see. There will be no harm done unless you wish there should be. That is the whole story. I tell you in advance so that you may know."

He stopped; the prisoner did not break the silence, and Thénardier resumed:

"As soon as my spouse has got back and said: 'The Lark is on her way,' we will release you, and you will be free to go home to bed. You see that we have no bad intentions."

Appalling images passed before Marius' mind. What! this young girl whom they were kidnapping, they were not going to bring her here? One of those monsters was going to carry her off into the gloom? where?—And if it were she! And it was clear that it was she! Marius felt his heart cease to beat. What was he to do? Fire off the pistol? put all these wretches into the hands of justice? But the hideous man of the pole-axe would none the less be out of all reach with the young girl, and Marius remembered these words of Thénardier, the bloody signification of which he divined: *If you have me arrested, my comrade will give the Lark a pinch.*

Now it was not by the colonel's will alone, it was by his love itself, by the peril of her whom he loved, that he felt himself held back.

This fearful situation, which had lasted now for more than an hour, changed its aspect at every moment. Marius had the strength to pass in review successively all the most heart-rending conjectures, seeking some hope and finding more. The tumult of his thoughts strangely contrasted with the deathly silence of the den.

In the midst of this silence they heard the sound of the door of the stairway which opened, then closed.

The prisoner made a movement in his bonds.

"Here is the bourgeoise," said Thénardier.

He had hardly said this, when in fact the Thénardiess burst into the room, red, panting, with glaring eyes, and cried, striking her big hands upon her hips both at the same time:

"False address!"

The bandit whom she had taken with her, camè in behind her and picked up his pole-axe again:

"False address?" repeated Thénardier.

She continued:

"Nobody! Rue Saint Dominique, number seventeen, no Monsieur Urbain Fabre! They do not know who he is!"

She stopped for lack of breath, then continued:

"Monsieur Thénardier! this old fellow has cheated you! you are too good, do you see! I would have cut up the *Margoulette* for you in quarters, to begin with! and if he had been ugly, I would have cooked him alive! Then he would have had to talk, and had to tell where the girl is, and had to tell where the rhino is! That is how I would have fixed it! No wonder that they say men are stupider than women! Nobody! number seventeen! It is a large porte-cochère! No Monsieur Fabre! Rue Saint Dominique, full gallop, and drink-money to the driver, and all! I spoke to the porter and the portress, who is a fine stout woman, they did not know the fellow."

Marius breathed. She, Ursula or the Lark, she whom he no longer knew what to call, was safe.

While his exasperated wife was vociferating, Thénardier had seated himself on the table; he sat a few seconds without saying a word, swinging his right leg, which was hanging down, and gazing upon the furnace with a look of savage reverie.

At last he said to the prisoner with a slow and singularly ferocious inflection:

"A false address! what did you hope for by that?"

"To gain time!" cried the prisoner with a ringing voice.

And at the same moment he shook off his bonds; they were cut. The prisoner was no longer fastened to the bed save by one leg.

Before the seven men had had time to recover themselves and to spring upon him, he had bent over to the fireplace, reached his hand towards the furnace, then rose up, and now Thénardier, the Thénardiess, and the bandits, thrown by the shock into the back part of the room, beheld him with stupefaction, holding above his head the glowing chisel, from which fell an ominous light, almost free and in a formidable attitude.

At the judicial inquest, to which the ambuscade in the Gorbeau tenement gave rise in the sequel, it appeared that a big sou, cut and worked in a peculiar fashion, was found in the garret, when the police made a descent upon it; this big sou was one of those marvels of labour which the patience of the galleys produces in the darkness and for the darkness, marvels which are nothing else but instruments of escape. These hideous and delicate products of a wonderful art are to jewellery what the metaphors of argot are to poetry. There are Benvenuto Cellinis in the galleys, even as there are Villons in language. The unhappy man who aspires to deliverance, finds the means, sometimes without tools, with a folding knife, with an old case knife, to split a sou into two thin plates, to hollow out these two plates without touching the stamp of the mint, and to cut a screw-thread upon the edge of the sou, so as to make the plates adhere anew. This screws and unscrews at will; it is a box. In this box, they conceal a watch-spring, and this watch-spring, well-handled, cuts off rings of some size and bars of iron. The unfortunate convict is supposed to possess only a sou; no, he possesses liberty. A big sou of this kind, on subsequent examination by the police, was found open and in two pieces in the room under the pallet near the window. There was also discovered a little saw of blue steel which could be concealed in the big sou. It is probable that when the bandits were searching the prisoner's pockets, he had this big sou upon him and succeeded in hiding it in his hand; and that afterwards, having his right hand free, he unscrewed it and used the saw to cut the ropes by which he was fastened, which would explain the slight noise and the imperceptible movements which Marius had noticed.

Being unable to stoop down for fear of betraying himself, he had not cut the cords on his left leg.

The bandits had recovered their first surprise.

"Be easy," said Bigrenaille to Thénardier. "He holds yet by one leg, and he will not go off, I answer for it. I tied that shank for him."

The prisoner now raised his voice:

"You are pitiable, but my life is not worth the trouble of so long a defence. As to your imagining that you could make me speak, that you could make me write what I do not wish to write, that you could make me say what I do not wish to say——"

He pulled up the sleeve of his left arm, and added:

"Here."

At the same time he extended his arm, and laid upon the naked flesh the glowing chisel, which he held in his right hand, by the wooden handle.

They heard the hissing of the burning flesh; the odour peculiar to chambers of torture spread through the den. Marius staggered, lost in horror; the brigands themselves felt a shudder; the face of the wonderful old man hardly contracted, and while the red iron was sinking into the smoking, impassible, and almost august wound, he turned upon Thénardier his fine face, in which there was no hatred, and in which suffering was swallowed up in a serene majesty.

With great and lofty natures the revolt of the flesh and the senses against the assaults of physical pain, brings out the soul, and makes it appear on the countenance, in the same way as mutinies of the soldiery force the captain to show himself.

"Wretches," said he, "have no more fear for me than I have of you."

"And drawing the chisel out of the wound, he threw it through the window, which was still open; the horrible glowing tool disappeared, whirling into the night, and fell in the distance and was quenched in the snow.

The prisoner resumed:

"Do with me what you will."

He was disarmed.

"Lay hold of him," said Thénardier.

Two of the brigands laid their hands upon his shoulders, and the masked man with the ventriloquist's voice placed himself in front of him, ready to knock out his brains with a blow of the key, at the least motion.

At the same time Marius heard beneath him, at the foot of the partition, but so near that he could not see those who were talking, this colloquy, exchanged in a low voice:

"There is only one thing more to do."

"To kill him!"

"That is it."

It was the husband and wife who were holding counsel.

Thénardier walked with slow steps towards the table, opened the drawer, and took out the knife.

Marius was tormenting the trigger of his pistol. Unparalleled perplexity! For an hour there had been two voices in his conscience, one telling him to respect the will of his father, the other crying to him to succour the prisoner. These two voices, without interruption, continued their struggle, which threw him into agony. He had vaguely hoped up to that moment to find some means of reconciling these two duties, but no possible way had arisen. The peril was now urgent, the last limit of hope was passed; at a few steps from the prisoner, Thénardier was reflecting, with the knife in his hand.

Marius cast his eyes wildly about him; the last mechanical resource of despair.

Suddenly he started.

At his feet, on the table, a clear ray of the full moon illuminated, and seemed to point out to him a sheet of paper. Upon that sheet he read this line, written in large letters that very morning, by the elder of the Thénardier girls:

"THE COGNES ARE HERE."

An idea, a flash crossed Marius' mind; that was the means which he sought; the solution of this dreadful problem which was torturing him, to spare the assassin and to save the victim. He knelt down upon his bureau, reached out his arm, caught up the sheet of paper, quietly detached a bit of plaster from the partition, wrapped it in the paper, and threw the whole through the crevice into the middle of the den.

It was time. Thénardier had conquered his last fears, or his last scruples, and was moving towards the prisoner.

"Something fell!" cried the Thénardiess.

"What is it?" said the husband.

The woman sprung forward, and picked up the piece of plaster wrapped in the paper. She handed it to her husband.

"How did this come in?" asked Thénardier.

"Egad!" said the woman, "how do you suppose it got in? It came through the window."

"I saw it pass," said Bigrenaille.

Thénardier hurriedly unfolded the paper, and held it up to the candle.

"It is Eponine's writing. The devil!"

He made a sign to his wife, who approached quickly, and he showed her the line written on the sheet of paper; then he added in a hollow voice:

"Quick! the ladder! leave the meat in the trap, and clear the camp!"

"Without cutting the man's throat?" asked the Thénardiess.

"We have not the time."

"Which way?" inquired Bigrenaille.

"Through the window," answered Thénardier. "Eponine threw the stone through the window, that shows that the house is not watched on that side."

The mask with the ventriloquist's voice laid down his big key, lifted both arms into the air, and opened and shut his hands rapidly three times, without saying a word. This was like the signal to clear the decks in a fleet. The brigands, who were holding the prisoner, let go of him; in the twinkling of an eye, the rope ladder was unrolled out of the window, and firmly fixed to the casing by the two iron hooks.

The prisoner paid no attention to what was passing about him. He seemed to be dreaming or praying.

As soon as the ladder was fixed, Thénardier cried:

"Come, bourgeoise!"

And he rushed towards the window.

But as he was stepping out, Bigrenaille seized him roughly by the collar.

"No; say now, old joker! after us."

"After us!' howled the bandits.

"You are children," said Thénardier. "We are losing time. The *railles* are at our heels."

"Well," said one of the bandits, "let us draw lots who shall go out first."

Thénardier exclaimed:

"Are you fools? are you cracked? You are a mess of *jobards!* Losing time, isn't it? drawing lots, isn't it? with a wet finger! for the short straw! write our names! put them in a cap!——"

"Would you like my hat?" cried a voice from the door.

They all turned round. It was Javert.

He had his hat in his hand, and was holding it out smiling.

THE VICTIMS SHOULD ALWAYS BE ARRESTED FIRST

JAVERT, at nightfall, had posted his men and hid himself behind the trees on the Rue de la Barrière des Gobelins, which fronts the Gorbeau tenement on the other side of the boulevard. He commenced by opening "his pocket," to put into it the two young girls, who were charged with watching the approaches to the den. But he only "bagged" Azelma. As for Eponine, she was not at her post; she had disappeared, and he could not take her. Then Javert put himself in rest, and listened for the signal agreed upon. The going and coming of the fiacre fretted him greatly. At last, he became impatient, and, *sure that there was a nest there,* sure of being *"in good luck,"* having recognised several of the bandits who had gone in, he finally decided to go up without waiting for the pistol shot.

It will be remembered that he had Marius' pass-key.

He had come at the right time.

The frightened bandits rushed for the arms which they had thrown down anywhere when they had attempted to escape. In less than a second, these seven men, terrible to look upon, were grouped in a posture of defence; one with his pole-axe, another with his key, a third with his club, the others with the shears, the pincers, and the hammers, Thénardier grasping his knife. The Thénardiess seized a huge paving-stone which was in the corner of the window, and which served her daughters for a cricket.

Javert put on his hat again, and stepped into the room, his arms folded, his cane under his arm, his sword in its sheath.

"Halt there," said he. "You will not pass out through the window, you will pass out through the door. It is less unwholesome. There are seven of you, fifteen of us. Don't let us collar you like Auvergnats. Be genteel."

Bigrenaille took a pistol which he had concealed under his blouse, and put it into Thénardier's hand, whispering in his ear:

"It is Javert. I dare not fire at that man. Dare you?"

"*Parbleu!*" answered Thénardier.

"Well, fire."

Thénardier took the pistol, and aimed at Javert.

Javert, who was within three paces, looked at him steadily, and contented himself with saying:

"Don't fire, now! It will flash in the pan."

Thénardier pulled the trigger. The pistol flashed in the pan.

"I told you so!" said Javert.

Bigrenaille threw his tomahawk at Javert's feet.

"You are the emperor of the devils! I surrender."

"And you?" asked Javert of the other bandits.

They answered:

"We, too."

Javert replied calmly:

"That is it, that is well, I said so, you are genteel."

"I only ask one thing," said Bigrenaille, "that is, that I shan't be refused tobacco while I am in solitary."

"Granted," said Javert.

And turning round and calling behind him:

"Come in now!"

A squad of sergents de ville with drawn swords, and officers armed with axes and clubs, rushed in at Javert's call. They bound the bandits. This crowd of men, dimly lighted by a candle, filled the den with shadow.

"Handcuffs on all!" cried Javert.

"Come on, then!" cried a voice which was not a man's voice, but of which nobody could have said: "It is the voice of a woman."

The Thénardiess had intrenched herself in one of the corners of the window, and it was she who had just uttered this roar.

She had thrown off her shawl, but kept on her hat; her husband, crouched down behind her, was almost hidden beneath the fallen shawl, and she covered him with her body, holding the paving stone with both

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THÉNARDIER TOOK THE PISTOL, AND AIMED AT JAVERT

hands above her head with the poise of a giantess who is going to hurl a rock.

"Take care!" she cried.

They all crowded back towards the hall. A wide space was left in the middle of the garret.

The Thénardiess cast a glance at the bandits who had allowed themselves to be tied, and muttered in a harsh and guttural tone:

"The cowards!"

Javert smiled, and advanced into the open space which the Thénardiess was watching with all her eyes.

"Don't come near! get out," cried she, "or I will crush you!"

"What a grenadier!" said Javert; "mother, you have a beard like a man, but I have claws like a woman."

And he continued to advance.

The Thénardiess, her hair flying wildly and terrible, braced her legs, bent backwards, and threw the paving stone wildly at Javert's head. Javert stooped, the stone passed over him, hit the wall behind, from which it knocked down a large piece of the plastering, and returned, bounding from corner to corner across the room, luckily almost empty, finally stopping at Javert's heels.

At that moment Javert reached the Thénardier couple. One of his huge hands fell upon the shoulder of the woman, and the other upon her husband's head.

"The handcuffs!" cried he.

The police officers returned in a body, and in a few seconds Javert's order was executed.

The Thénardiess, completely crushed, looked at her manacled hands and those of her husband, dropped to the floor and exclaimed, with tears in her eyes:

"My daughters!"

"They are provided for," said Javert.

Meanwhile the officers had found the drunken fellow who was asleep behind the door, and shook him. He awoke stammering.

"Is it over, Jondrette?"

"Yes," answered Javert.

The six manacled bandits were standing; however, they still retained their spectral appearance, three blackened, three masked.

"Keep on your masks," said Javert.

And, passing them in review with the eye of a Frederic II. at parade at Potsdam, he said to the three "chimney doctors:"

"Good day, Bigrenaille. Good day, Brujon. Good day, Deux Milliards."

Then, turning towards the three masks, he said to the man of the pole-axe:

"Good day, Gueulemer."

And to the man of the cudgel:

"Good day, Babet."

And to the ventriloquist:

"Your health, Claquesous."

Just then he perceived the prisoner of the bandits, who, since the entrance of the police, had not uttered a word, and had held his head down.

"Untie monsieur!" said Javert, "and let nobody go out."

This said, he sat down with authority before the table, on which the candle and the writing materials still were, drew a stamped sheet from his pocket, and commenced his procès-verbal.

When he had written the first lines, a part of the formula, which is always the same, he raised his eyes:

"Bring forward the gentleman whom these gentlemen had bound."

The officers looked about them.

"Well," asked Javert, "where is he now?"

The prisoner of the bandits, M. Leblanc, M. Urbain Fabre, the father of Ursula, or the Lark, had disappeared.

The door was guarded, but the window was not. As soon as he saw that he was unbound, and while Javert was writing, he had taken advantage of the disturbance, the tumult, the confusion, the obscurity, and a moment when their attention was was not fixed upon him, to leap out of the window.

An officer ran to the window, and looked out; nobody could be seen outside.

The rope ladder was still trembling.

"The devil!" said Javert, between his teeth, "that must have been the best one."

SAINT DENIS
AND
IDYL OF THE RUE PLUMET

BOOK I—EPONINE

THE FIELD OF THE LARK

Marius had seen the unexpected denouement of the ambuscade upon the track of which he had put Javert; but hardly had Javert left the old ruin, carrying away his prisoners in three coaches, when Marius also slipped out of the house. It was only nine o'clock in the evening. Marius went to Courfeyrac's. Courfeyrac was no longer the imperturbable inhabitant of the Latin Quarter; he had gone to live in the Rue de la Verrerie "for political reasons"; this quarter was one of those in which the insurrection was fond of installing itself in those days. Marius said to Courfeyrac: "I have come to sleep with you." Courfeyrac drew a mattress from his bed, where there were two, laid it on the floor, and said: "There you are."

The next day, by seven o'clock in the morning, Marius went back to the tenement, paid his rent, and what was due to Ma'am Bougon, had his books, bed, table, bureau, and his two chairs loaded upon a handcart, and went off without leaving his address, so that when Javert came back in the forenoon to question Marius about the events of the evening, he found only Ma'am Bougon, who answered him, "moved!"

Ma'am Bougon was convinced that Marius was somehow an accomplice of the robbers seized the night before. "Who would have thought so?" she exclaimed among the portresses of the quarter, "a young man who had so much the appearance of a girl!"

Marius had two reasons for this prompt removal. The first was, that he now had a horror of that house, where he had seen, so near at hand, and in all its most repulsive and most ferocious development, a social deformity perhaps still more hideous than the evil rich man: the evil poor. The second was, that he did not wish to figure in the trial which would probably follow, and be brought forward to testify against Thénardier.

Javert thought that the young man, whose name he had not retained, had been frightened and had escaped, or, perhaps, had not even returned home at the time of the ambuscade; still he made some effort to find him, but he did not succeed.

A month rolled away, then another. Marius was still with Courfeyrac. He knew from a young attorney, an habitual attendant in the ante-rooms of the court, that Thénardier was in solitary confinement. Every Monday Marius sent to the clerk of La Force five francs for Thénardier.

Marius, having now no money, borrowed the five francs of Courfeyrac. It was the first time in his life that he had borrowed money. This periodical five francs was a double enigma, to them. "To whom can it go?" thought Courfeyrac. "Where can it come from?" Thénardier asked himself.

Marius, moreover, was in sore affliction. Everything had relapsed into darkness. He no longer saw anything before him; his life was again plunged into that mystery in which he had been blindly groping. He had for a moment seen close at hand in that obscurity, the young girl whom he loved, the old man who seemed her father, these unknown beings who were his only interest and his only hope in this world; and at the moment he had thought to hold them fast, a breath had swept all those shadows away. Not a spark of certainty or truth had escaped even from that most fearful shock. No conjecture was possible. He knew not even the name which he had thought he knew. Certainly it was no longer Ursula. And the Lark was a nickname. And what should he think of the old man? Was he really hiding from the police? The white-haired working-man whom Marius had met in the neighbourhood of the Invalides recurred to his mind. It now became probable that that working-man and M. Leblanc were the same man. He disguised himself then? This man had heroic sides and equivocal sides. Why had he not called for help? why had he escaped? was he, yes or no, the father of the young girl? Finally, was he really the man whom Thénardier thought he recognised? Could Thénardier have been mistaken? So many problems without issue. All this, it is true detracted nothing from the angelic charms of the young girl of the Luxembourg. Bitter wretchedness; Marius had a passion in his heart, and night over his eyes. He was pushed, he was drawn, and he could not stir. All had vanished, except love. Even of love, he had lost the instincts and the sudden illuminations. Ordinarily, this flame which consumes us, illumines us also a little, and sheds some useful light without. Those vague promptings of passion, Marius no longer even heard. Never did he say to himself: Suppose I go there? suppose I try this? She whom he could no longer call Ursula was evidently somewhere; nothing indicated to Marius the direction in which he must seek for her. His whole life was now resumed in two words: an absolute uncertainty in an impenetrable mist. To see her again, Her; he aspired to this continually; he hoped for it no longer.

The days passed, however, one after another, and there was nothing new. It seemed to him, merely, that the dreary space which remained for him to run through was contracting with every instant. He thought that he already saw distinctly the brink of the bottomless precipice.

"What!" he repeated to himself, "shall I never see her again before!"

If you go up the Rue Saint Jacques, leave the Barrière at your side, and follow the old interior boulevard to the left for some distance, you come to the Rue de la Santé, then La Glacière, and, a little before reaching the small stream of the Gobelins, you find a sort of field, which is, in the long and monotonous circuit of the boulevards of Paris, the only spot where Ruysdael would be tempted to sit down.

That indescribable something from which grace springs is there, a green meadow crossed by tight drawn ropes, on which rags are drying in the wind, an old market-garden farmhouse built in the time of Louis XIII., with its large roof grotesquely pierced with dormer windows, broken palisade fences, a small pond between the poplars, women, laughter, voices; in the horizon the Pantheon, the tree of the Deaf-mutes, the Val de Grâce, black, squat, fantastic, amusing, magnificent, and in the background the severe square summits of the towers of Notre Dame.

As the place is worth seeing, nobody goes there. Hardly a cart or a waggon once in a quarter of an hour.

It happened one day that Marius' solitary walks conducted him to this spot near this pond. That day there was a rarity on the boulevard, a passer. Marius, vaguely struck with the almost sylvan charm of the spot, asked this traveller: "What is the name of this place?"

The traveller answered: "It is the Field of the Lark."

And he added: "It was here that Ulbach killed the shepherdess of Ivry."

But after that word, "the Lark," Marius had heard nothing more. There are such sudden congelations in the dreamy state, which a word is sufficient to produce. The whole mind condenses abruptly about one idea, and ceases to be capable of any other perception.

The Lark was the appellation which, in the depths of Marius' melancholy, had replaced Ursula. "Yes," said he in the kind of unreasoning stupor peculiar to these mysterious asides, "this is her field. I shall learn here where she lives."

This was absurd, but irresistible.

And he came every day to this Field of the Lark.

AN APPARITION TO FATHER MABEUF

Marius now visited nobody, but he sometimes happened to meet Father Mabeuf.

While Marius was slowly descending those dismal steps, which one might call cellar stairs, and which lead into places without light where we hear the happy walking above us, M. Mabeuf also was descending.

M. Mabeuf could only cultivate a few rare plants which like moisture and shade. He was not discouraged, however. He had obtained a bit of ground in the Jardin des Plantes, with a good exposure, to carry on, "at his own cost," his experiments upon indigo. He had reduced his breakfast to two eggs, and he left one of them for his old servant, whose wages he had not paid for fifteen months. And often his breakfast was his only meal. He laughed no more with his childlike laugh, he had become morose, and he now received no visits. Marius was right in not thinking to come. Sometimes, at the hour when M. Mabeuf went to the Jardin des Plantes, the old man and the young man met on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. They did not speak, but sadly nodded their heads. It is a bitter thing that there should be a moment when misery unbinds! They had been two friends, they were two passers.

One night M. Mabeuf saw a singular apparition.

He had come home while it was still broad day. Mother Plutarch, his devoted old servant, whose health was poor, was sick and gone to bed. He had dined on a bone on which a little meat was left, and a bit of bread which he had found on the kitchen table, and had sat down on a block of stone, which took the place of a seat in his garden.

Near this seat there rose, in the fashion of the old orchard-gardens, a sort of hut, in a ruinous condition, of joists and boards, a warren on the ground floor, a fruit-house above. There were no rabbits in the warren, but there were a few apples in the fruit-house. A remnant of the winter's store.

M. Mabeuf had begun to look through, reading by the way, with the help of his spectacles, two books which enchanted him, and in which he was even absorbed, a more serious thing at his age. Twilight was beginning to whiten all above and to blacken all below. As he read, Father Mabeuf was looking over the book which he held in his hand, at his plants, and among others at a magnificent rhododendron which was one of his consolations; there had been four days of drought, wind, and sun, without a drop of rain; the stalks bent over, the buds hung down, the leaves were falling, they all needed to be watered; the rhododendron especially was a sad sight. Father Mabeuf was one of those to whom plants have souls. The old man worked all day on his indigo bed, he was exhausted with fatigue, he got up nevertheless, put his books upon the bench, and walked, bent over and with tottering steps, to the well, but when he had grasped the chain, he could not even draw it far enough to unhook it. Then he turned and looked with a look of anguish towards the sky which was filling with stars.

The evening had that serenity which buries the sorrows of man under a strangely dreary yet eternal joy. The night promised to be as dry as the day had been.

"Stars everywhere!" thought the old man; "not the smallest cloud! not a drop of water."

And his head, which had been raised for a moment, fell back upon his breast.

He raised it again and looked at the sky, murmuring:

"A drop of dew! a little pity!"

He endeavoured once more to unhook the well-chain, but he could not.

At this moment he heard a voice which said:

"Father Mabeuf, would you like to have me water your garden?"

At the same time he heard a sound like that of a passing deer in the hedge, and he saw springing out of the shrubbery a sort of tall, slender girl, who came and stood before him, looking boldly at him. She had less the appearance of a human being than of a form which had just been born of the twilight.

Before Father Mabeuf, who was easily startled, and who was, as we have said, subject to fear, could answer a word, this being, whose motions seemed grotesquely abrupt in the obscurity, had unhooked the chain, plunged in and drawn out the bucket, and filled the watering-pot, and the goodman saw this apparition with bare feet and a ragged skirt running along the beds, distributing life about her. The sound of the water upon the leaves filled Father Mabeuf's soul with transport. It seemed to him that now the rhododendron was happy.

When the first bucket was emptied, the girl drew a second, then a third. She watered the whole garden.

Moving thus along the walks, her outline appearing entirely black, shaking her torn shawl over her long angular arms, she seemed something like a bat.

When she had ended, Father Mabeuf approached her with tears in his eyes, and laid his hand upon her forehead.

"God will bless you," said he, "you are an angel, since you care for flowers."

"No," she answered, "I am the devil, but that is all the same to me."

The old man exclaimed, without waiting for and without hearing her answer:

"What a pity that I am so unfortunate and so poor, and that I cannot do anything for you!"

"You can do something," said she.

"What?"

"Tell me where M. Marius lives."

The old man did not understand.

"What Monsieur Marius?"

He raised his glassy eye and appeared to be looking for something that had vanished.

"A young man who used to come here."

Meanwhile M. Mabeuf had fumbled in his memory.

"Ah! yes,—" he exclaimed, "I know what you mean. Listen, now! Monsieur Marius—the Baron Marius Pontmercy, yes! he lives—or rather he does not live there now—ah! well, I don't know."

While he spoke, he had bent over to tie up a branch of the rhododendron, and he continued:

"Ah! I remember now. He passes up the boulevard very often, and goes toward La Glacière, Rue Croulebarbe. The Field of the Lark. Go that way. He isn't hard to find."

When M. Mabeuf rose up, there was nobody there; the girl had disappeared.

He was decidedly a little frightened.

"Really," thought he, "if my garden was not watered, I should think it was a spirit."

An hour later when he had gone to bed, this returned to him, and, as he was falling asleep, at that troubled moment when thought, like that fabulous bird which changes itself into fish to pass through the sea, gradually takes the form of dream to pass through sleep, he said to himself confusedly:

"Indeed, this much resembles what Rubaudière relates of the goblins. Could it be a goblin?"

AN APPARITION TO MARIUS

A FEW days after this visit of a "spirit" to Father Mabeuf, one morning Marius went "to take a little walk," hoping that it would enable him to work on his return. It was eternally so. He lived in the Field of the Lark rather than in Courfeyrac's room. This was his real address: Boulevard de la Santé, seventh tree from the Rue Croulebarbe.

That morning, he had left this seventh tree, and sat down on the bank of the brook of the Gobelins. The bright sun was gleaming through the new and glossy leaves.

He was thinking of "Her!" And his dreaminess, becoming reproachful, fell back upon himself; he thought sorrowfully of the idleness, the paralysis of the soul, which was growing up within him, and of that night which was thickening before him hour by hour so rapidly that he had already ceased to see the sun.

Meanwhile, through this painful evolution of indistinct ideas which were not even a soliloquy, so much had action become enfeebled within him, and he no longer had even the strength to develop his grief—through this melancholy distraction, the sensations of the world without reached him. He heard behind and below him, on both banks of the stream, the washerwoman of the Gobelins beating their linen; and over his head, the birds chattering and singing in the elms. On the one hand the sound of liberty, of happy unconcern, of winged leisure; on the other, the sound of labour. A thing which made him muse profoundly, and almost reflect, these two joyous sounds.

All at once, in the midst of his ecstasy of exhaustion, he heard a voice which was known to him, say:

"Ah! there he is!"

He raised his eyes and recognised the unfortunate child who had come to his room one morning, the elder of the Thénardier girls, Eponine; he now knew her name. Singular fact, she had become more wretched and more beautiful, two steps which seemed impossible. She had accomplished a double progress towards the light, and towards distress. She was barefooted and in rags, as on the day when she had so resolutely entered his room, only her rags were two months older; the holes were larger, the tatters dirtier. It was the same rough voice, the same forehead tanned and wrinkled by exposure; the same free, wild, and wandering gaze. She had, in addition to her former expression, that mixture of fear and sorrow which the experience of a prison adds to misery.

She had spears of straw and grass in her hair, not like Ophelia from having gone mad through the contagion of Hamlet's madness, but because she had slept in some stable loft.

And with all this, she was beautiful. What a star thou art, O youth!

Meantime, she had stopped before Marius, with an expression of pleasure upon her livid face, and something which resembled a smile.

She stood for a few seconds, as if she could not speak.

"I have found you, then?" said she at last. "Father Mabeuf was right; it was on this boulevard. How I have looked for you? if you only knew? Do you know? I have been in the jug. A fortnight! They have let me out! seeing that there was nothing against me, and then I was not of the age of discernment. It lacked two months. Oh! how I have looked for you! it is six weeks now. You don't live down there any longer?"

"No," said Marius.

"Oh! I understand. On account of the affair. Such scares are disagreeable. You have moved. What! why do you wear such an old hat as that? a young man like you ought to have fine clothes. Do you know, Monsieur Marius? Father Mabeuf calls you Baron Marius, I forget what more. It's not true that you are a baron? barons are old fellows, they go to the Luxembourg in front of the chateau where there is the most sun, they read the *Quotidienne* for a sou. I went once for a letter to a baron's like that. He was more than a hundred years old. But tell me, where do you live now?"

Marius did not answer.

"Ah!" she continued, "you have a hole in your shirt. I must mend it for you."

She resumed with an expression which gradually grew darker:

"You don't seem to be glad to see me?"

Marius said nothing; she herself was silent for a moment, then exclaimed:

"But if I would, I could easily make you glad!"

"How?" inquired Marius. "What does that mean?"

"Ah! you used to speak more kindly to me!" replied she.

"Well, what is it that you mean?"

She bit her lip; she seemed to hesitate, as if passing through a kind of interior struggle. At last, she appeared to decide upon her course.

"So much the worse, it makes no difference. You look sad, I want you to be glad. But promise me that you will laugh, I want to see you laugh and hear you say: Ah, well! that is good. Poor Monsieur Marius! you know, you promised me that you would give me whatever I should ask—"

"Yes! but tell me!"

She looked into Marius' eyes and said:

"I have the address."

Marius turned pale. All his blood flowed back to his heart.

"What address?"

"The address you asked me for!"

She added as if she were making an effort:

"The address—you know well enough!"

"Yes!" stammered Marius.

"Of the young lady!"

Having pronounced this word, she sighed deeply.

Marius sprang up from the bank on which he was sitting, and took her wildly by the hand.

"Oh! come! show me the way, tell me! ask me for whatever you will! Where is it?"

"Come with me," she answered. "I am not sure of the street and the number; it is away on the other side from here, but I know the house very well. I will show you."

She withdrew her hand and added in a tone which would have pierced the heart of an observer, but which did not even touch the intoxicated and transported Marius:

"Oh! how glad you are!"

A cloud passed over Marius' brow. He seized Eponine by the arm·

"Swear to me one thing!"

"Swear?" said she, "what does that mean? Ah! you want me to swear?"

And she laughed.

"Your father! promise me, Eponine! swear to me that you will not give this address to your father!"

She turned towards him with an astounded appearance.

"Eponine! How do you know that my name is Eponine?"

"Promise what I ask you!"

But she did not seem to understand.

"That is nice! you called me Eponine!"

Marius caught her by both arms at once.

"But answer me now, in heaven's name! pay attention to what I am saying, swear to me that you will not give the address you know to your father!"

"My father?" said she. "Oh! yes, my father! Do not be concerned on his account. He is in solitary. Besides, do I busy myself about my father!"

"But you don't promise me!" exclaimed Marius.

"Let me go then!" said she, bursting into a laugh, "how you shake me! Yes! yes! I promise you that! I swear to you that! What is it to me? I won't give the address to my father. There! will that do? is that it?"

"Nor to anybody?" said Marius.

"Nor to anybody."

"Now," added Marius, "show me the way."

"Right away?"

"Right away."

BOOK II—THE HOUSE IN THE RUE PLUMET

THE SECRET HOUSE

Towards the middle of the last century, a velvet-capped president of the Parlement of Paris had *"une petite maison"* built in the Faubourg Saint Germain, in the deserted Rue de Blomet, now called the Rue Plumet, not far from the spot which then went by the name of the *Combat des Animaux.*

This was a summer-house of but two stories; two rooms on the ground floor, two chambers in the second story, a kitchen below, a boudoir above, a garret next the roof, the whole fronted by a garden with a large iron grated gate opening on the street. This garden contained about an acre. This was all that the passers-by could see; but in the rear of the house there was a small yard, at the further end of which there was a low building, two rooms only and a cellar, a convenience intended to conceal a child and nurse in case of need. This building communicated, from the rear, by a masked door opening secretly, with a long narrow passage, paved, winding, open to the sky, bordered by two high walls, and which, concealed with wonderful art, and as it were lost between the inclosures of the gardens and fields, all the corners and turnings of which it followed, came to an end at another door, also concealed, which opened a third of a mile away, almost in another quartier, upon the unbuilt end of the Rue de Babylone.

The house, built of stone in the Mansard style, wainscoted, and furnished in the Watteau style, rock-work within, peruke without, walled about with a triple hedge of flowers, had a discreet, coquettish, and solemn appearance about it, suitable to a caprice of love and of magistracy.

This house and this passage, which have since disappeared, were still in existence fifteen years ago. In '93, a coppersmith bought the house to pull it down, but not being able to pay the price for it, the nation sent him into bankruptcy. So that it was the house that pulled down the coppersmith. Thereafter the house remained empty, and fell slowly into ruin, like all dwellings to which the presence of man no longer communicates life. It remained, furnished with its old furniture, and always for sale or for let, and the ten or twelve persons who passed through the Rue Plumet in the course of a year were notified of this by a yellow and illegible piece of paper which had hung upon the railing of the garden since 1810.

Towards the end of the Restoration, these same passers might have noticed that the paper had disappeared, and that, also, the shutters of the upper story were open. The house was indeed occupied. The windows had "little curtains," a sign that there was a woman there.

In the month of October, 1829, a man of a certain age had appeared and hired the house as it stood, including, of course, the building in the rear, and the passage which ran out to the Rue de Babylone. He had the secret openings of the two doors of this passage repaired. The house, as we have just said, was still nearly furnished with the president's old furniture. The new tenant had ordered a few repairs, added here and there what was lacking, put in a few flags in the yard, a few bricks in the basement, a few steps in the staircase, a few tiles in the floors, a few panes in the windows, and finally came and installed himself with a young girl and an aged servant, without any noise, rather like somebody stealing in than like a man who enters his own house. The neighbours did not gossip about it, for the reason that there were no neighbours.

This tenant, to partial extent, was Jean Valjean; the young girl was Cosette. The servant was a spinster named Toussaint, whom

Jean Valjean had saved from the hospital and misery, and who was old, stuttering, and a native of a province, three qualities which had determined Jean Valjean to take her with him. He hired the house under the name of Monsieur Fauchelevent, gentleman. In what has been related hitherto, the reader doubtless recognised Jean Valjean even before Thénardier did.

Why had Jean Valjean left the convent of the Petit Picpus? What had happened?

Nothing had happened.

As we remember, Jean Valjean was happy in the convent, so happy that his conscience at last began to be troubled. He saw Cosette every day, he felt paternity springing up and developing within him more and more, he brooded this child with his soul, he said to himself that she was his, that nothing could take her from him, that this would be so indefinitely, that certainly she would become a nun, being every day gently led on towards it, that thus the convent was henceforth the universe to her as well as him, that he would grow old there and she would grow up there, that she would grow old there and he would die there; that finally, ravishing hope, no separation was possible. In reflecting upon this, he at last began to find difficulties. He questioned himself. He asked himself if all this happiness were really his own, if it were not made up of the happiness of another, of the happiness of this child whom he was appropriating and plundering, he, an old man; if this was not robbery? He said to himself that this child had a right to know what life was before renouncing it; that to cut her off, in advance, and, in some sort, without consulting her, from all pleasure, under pretence of saving her from all trial, to take advantage of her ignorance and isolation, to give her an artificial vocation, was to outrage a human creature and to lie to God. And who knows but, thinking over all this some day, and being a nun with regret, Cosette might come to hate him? a final thought, which was almost selfish and less heroic than the others, but which was insupportable to him. He resolved to leave the convent.

He resolved it, he recognised with despair that it must be done. As to objections, there were none. Five years of sojourn between those four walls, and of absence from among men, had necessarily destroyed or dispersed the elements of alarm. He might return tranquilly among men. He had grown old, and all had changed. Who would recognise him now? And then, to look at the worst, there was no danger save for himself, and he had no right to condemn Cosette to the cloister for the reason that he had been condemned to the galleys. What, moreover, is danger in presence of duty? Finally, nothing prevented him from being prudent, and taking proper precautions.

As to Cosette's education, it was almost finished and complete.

His determination once formed, he awaited an opportunity. It was not slow to present itself. Old Fauchelevent died.

Jean Valjean asked an audience of the reverend prioress, and told her that having received a small inheritance on the death of his brother, which enabled him to live henceforth without labour, he would leave the service of the convent, and take away his daughter; but that, as it was not just that Cosette, not taking her vows, should have been educated gratuitously, he humbly begged the reverend prioress to allow him to offer the community, as indemnity for the five years which Cosette had passed there, the sum of five thousand francs.

Thus Jean Valjean left the convent of the Perpetual Adoration.

On leaving the convent, he took in his own hands, and would not entrust to any assistant, the little box, the key of which he always had about him. This box puzzled Cosette, on account of the odour of embalming which came from it.

Let us say at once, that henceforth this box never left him more. He always had it in his room. It was the first, and sometimes the only thing that he carried away in his changes of abode. Cosette laughed about it, and called this box *the inseparable,* saying: "I am jealous of it."

Jean Valjean nevertheless did not appear again in the open city without deep anxiety.

He discovered the house in the Rue Plumet, and buried himself in it. He was henceforth in possession of the name of Ultimus Fauchelevent.

At the same time he hired two other lodgings in Paris, in order to attract less attention than if he always remained in the same quartier, to be able to change his abode on occasion, at the slightest anxiety which he might feel, and finally, that he might not again find himself in such a strait as on the night when he had so miraculously escaped from Javert. These two lodgings were two very humble dwellings, and of a poor appearance, in two quartiers widely distant from each other, one in the Rue de l'Ouest, the other in the Rue de l' Homme Armé.

He went from time to time, now to the Rue de l'Homme Armé, and now to the Rue de l'Ouest, to spend a month or six weeks, with Cosette, without taking Toussaint. He was waited upon by the porters, and gave himself out for a man of some means of the suburbs, having a foothold in the city. This lofty virtue had three domiciles in Paris in order to escape from the police.

JEAN VALJEAN A NATIONAL GUARD

Still, properly speaking, he lived in the Rue Plumet, and he had ordered his life there in the following manner:

Cosette with the servant occupied the house; she had the large bedroom with painted piers, the boudoir with gilded mouldings, the president's parlour furnished with tapestry and huge arm-chairs; she had the garden. Jean Valjean had a bed put into Cosette's chamber with a canopy of antique damask in three colours, and an old and beautiful Persian carpet, bought at Mother Gaucher's in the Rue du Figuier Saint Paul, and, to soften the severity of these magnificent relics, he had added to this curiosity shop all the little lively and graceful pieces of furniture used by young girls, an étagère, a bookcase and gilt books, a writing-case, a blotting-case, a work-table inlaid with pearl, a silver-gilt dressing-case, a dressing table in Japan porcelain. Long damask curtains of three colours, on a red ground, matching those of the bed, hung at the second story windows. On the first floor, tapestry curtains. All winter Cosette's Petite Maison was warmed from top to bottom. For his part, he lived in the sort of porter's lodge in the back-yard, with a mattress on a cot bedstead, a white wood table, two straw chairs, an earthen water-pitcher, a few books upon a board, his dear box in a corner, never any fire. He dined with Cosette, and there was a black loaf on the table for him. He said to

Toussaint, when she entered their service: "Mademoiselle is the mistress of the house." "And you, m-monsieur?" replied Toussaint, astounded. "Me, I am much better than the master, I am the father."

Cosette had been trained to housekeeping in the convent, and she regulated the expenses, which were very moderate. Every day Jean Valjean took Cosette's arm, and went to walk with her. They went to the least frequented walk of the Luxembourg, and every Sunday to mass, always at Saint Jacques du Haut Pas, because it was quite distant. As that is a very poor quartier, he gave much alms there, and the unfortunate surrounded him in the church, which had given him the title of the superscription of the epistle of the Thénardiers: *To the benevolent gentleman of the church of Saint Jacques du Haut Pas.* He was fond of taking Cosette to visit the needy and the sick. No stranger came into the house in the Rue Plumet. Toussaint brought the provisions, and Jean Valjean himself went after the water to a watering trough which was near by on the boulevard. They kept the wood and the wine in a kind of semi-subterranean vault covered with rock-work, which was near the door on the Rue de Babylone, and which had formerly served the president as a grotto; for, in the time of the Folies and the Petites Maisons, there was no love without a grotto.

There was on the Rue de Babylone door a box for letters and papers; but the three occupants of the summer-house on the Rue Plumet receiving neither papers nor letters, the entire use of the box, formerly the agent of amours and the confidant of a legal spark, was now limited to the notices of the receiver of taxes and the Guard warnings. For M. Fauchelevent belonged to the National Guard: he had not been able to escape the close meshes of the enrolment of 1831. The municipal investigation made at that time had extended even to the convent of the Petit Picpus, a sort of impenetrable and holy cloud from which Jean Valjean had come forth venerable in the eyes of his magistracy, and, in consequence, worthy of mounting guard.

Three or four times a year, Jean Valjean donned his uniform, and performed his duties; very willingly moreover; it was a good disguise for him, which associated him with everybody else while leaving him solitary. Jean Valjean had completed his sixtieth year, the age of legal exemption; but he did not appear more than fifty; moreover, he had no desire to escape from his sergeant-major and to cavil with the Count de Lobau; he had no civil standing; he was concealing his name, he was concealing his identity, he was concealing his age, he was concealing everything; and, we have just said, he was very willingly a National Guard. To resemble the crowd who pay their taxes, this was his whole ambition. This man had for his ideal within, the angel—without, the bourgeois.

We must note one incident, however. When Jean Valjean went out with Cosette, he dressed as we have seen, and had much the air of an old officer. When he went out alone, and this was most usually in the evening, he was always clad in the waistcoat and trousers of a working-man, and wore a cap which hid his face. Was this precaution, or humility? Both at once. Cosette was accustomed to the enigmatic aspect of her destiny, and hardly noticed her father's singularities. As for Toussaint, she venerated Jean Valjean, and thought everything good that he did. One day, her butcher, who had caught sight of Jean Valjean, said to her: "That is a funny body." She answered: "He is a s-saint!"

Neither Jean Valjean, nor Cosette, nor Toussaint, ever came in or went out except by the gate on the Rue de Babylone. Unless one had seen them through the grated gate of the garden, it would have been difficult to guess that they lived in the Rue Plumet. This gate always remained closed. Jean Valjean had left the garden uncultivated, that it might not attract attention.

In this, he deceived himself, perhaps.

THE ROSE DISCOVERS THAT SHE IS AN ENGINE OF WAR

One day Cosette happened to look in her mirror, and she said to herself: "What!" It seemed to her almost that she was pretty. This threw her into strange anxiety. Up to this moment she had never thought of her face. She had seen herself in her glass, but she had not looked at herself. And then, she had often been told that she was homely; Jean Valjean alone would quietly say: "Why no! why! no!" However that might be, Cosette had always thought herself homely, and had grown up in that idea with the pliant resignation of childhood. And now suddenly her mirror said like Jean Valjean:

"Why no!" She had no sleep that night. "If I were pretty!" thought she, "how funny it would be if I should be pretty!" And she called to mind those of her companions whose beauty had made an impression in the convent, and said: "What! I should be like Mademoiselle Such-a-one!"

The next day she looked at herself, but not by chance, and she doubted. "Where were my wits gone?" said she, "no, I am homely." She had merely slept badly, her eyes were dark and she was pale. She had not felt very happy the evening before, in the thought that she was beautiful, but she was sad at thinking so no longer. She did not look at herself again, and for more than a fortnight she tried to dress her hair with her back to the mirror.

In the evening after dinner, she regularly made tapestry or did some convent work in the parlour, while Jean Valjean read by her side. Once, on raising her eyes from her work, she was very much surprised at the anxious way in which her father was looking at her.

At another time, she was passing along the street, and it seemed to her that somebody behind her, whom she did not see, said: "Pretty woman! but badly dressed." "Pshaw!" thought she, "that is not me. I am well dressed and homely." She had on at the time her plush hat and merino dress.

At last, she was in the garden one day, and heard poor old Toussaint saying: "Monsieur, do you notice how pretty mademoiselle is growing?" Cosette did not hear what her father answered. Toussaint's words threw her into a sort of commotion. She ran out of the garden, went up to her room, hurried to the glass, it was three months since she had looked at herself, and uttered a cry. She was dazzled by herself.

She was beautiful and handsome; she could not help being of Toussaint's and her mirror's opinion. Her form was complete, her skin had become white, her hair had grown lustrous, an unknown splendour was lighted up in her blue eyes. The consciousness of her beauty came to her entire, in a moment, like broad daylight when it bursts upon us; others noticed it moreover, Toussaint said so, it was of her evidently that the passer had spoken, there was no more doubt; she went down into the garden again, thinking herself a queen, hearing the birds sing, it was in winter, seeing the sky golden, the sunshine in the trees, flowers among the shrubbery, wild, mad, in an inexpressible rapture.

For his part, Jean Valjean felt a deep and undefinable anguish in his heart.

From that day, he noticed that Cosette, who previously was always asking to stay in, saying: "Father, I enjoy myself better here with you," was now always asking to go out. Indeed, what is the use of having a pretty face and a delightful dress, if you do not show them?

He also noticed that Cosette no longer had the same taste for the back-yard. She now preferred to stay in the garden, walking even without displeasure before the grating. Jean Valjean, ferocious, did not set his foot in the garden. He stayed in his back-yard, like a dog.

Cosette, by learning that she was beautiful, lost the grace of not knowing it; an exquisite grace, for beauty heightened by artlessness is ineffable, and nothing is so adorable as dazzling innocence, going on her way, and holding in her hand, all unconscious, the key of a paradise. But what she lost in ingenuous grace, she gained in pensive and serious charm. Her whole person, pervaded by the joys of youth, innocence, and beauty, breathed a splendid melancholy.

It was at this period that Marius, after the lapse of six months, saw her again at the Luxembourg.

TO SADNESS, SADNESS AND A HALF

Every condition has its instinct. The old and eternal mother, Nature, silently warned Jean Valjean of the presence of Marius. Jean Valjean shuddered in the darkness of his mind. Jean Valjean saw nothing, knew nothing, but still gazed with persistent fixedness at the darkness which surrounded him, as if he perceived on one side something which was building, and on the other something which was falling down. Marius, also warned, and, according to the deep law of God, by this same mother, Nature, did all that he could to hide himself from the "father." It happened, however, that Jean Valjean sometimes perceived him. Marius' ways were no longer at all natural. He had an equivocal prudence and an awkward boldness. He ceased to come near them as formerly; he sat down at a distance, and remained there in an ecstasy; he had a book and pretended to be reading; why did he pretend? Formerly he came with his old coat, now he had his new coat on every day; it was not very certain that he did not curl his hair, he had strange eyes, he wore gloves; in short, Jean Valjean cordially detested this young man.

Cosette gave no ground for suspicion. Without knowing exactly what affected her, she had a very definite feeling that it was something, and that it must be concealed.

There was between the taste for dress which had arisen in Cosette and the habit of wearing new coats which had grown upon this unknown man, a parallelism which made Jean Valjean anxious. It was an accident perhaps, doubtless, certainly, but a threatening accident.

We know the rest. The insanity of Marius continued. One day he followed Cosette to the Rue l'Ouest. Another day he spoke to the porter: the porter in his turn spoke, and said to Jean Valjean: "Monsieur, who is that curious young man who has been asking for you?" The next day, Jean Valjean cast that glance at Marius which Marius finally perceived. A week after, Jean Valjean had moved. He resolved that he would never set his foot again either in the Luxembourg, or in the Rue de l'Ouest. He returned to the Rue Plumet.

Cosette did not complain, she said nothing, she asked no questions, she did not seek to know any reason; she was already at that point at which one fears discovery and self-betrayal. Jean Valjean had no experience of this misery, the only misery which is charming, the only misery which he did not know; for this reason, he did not understand the deep significance of Cosette's silence. He noticed only that she had become sad, and he became gloomy. There was on either side an armed inexperience.

Once he made a trial. He asked Cosette:

"Would you like to go to the Luxembourg?"

A light illumined Cosette's pale face.

"Yes," said she.

They went. Three months had passed. Marius went there no longer. Marius was not there.

The next day, Jean Valjean asked Cosette again:

"Would you like to go to the Luxembourg?"

She answered sadly and quietly:

"No!"

Jean Valjean was hurt by this sadness, and harrowed by this gentleness.

What was taking place in this spirit so young, and already so impenetrable? What was in course of accomplishment in it? what was happening to Cosette's soul? Sometimes, instead of going to bed, Jean Valjean sat by his bedside with his head in his hands, and he spent whole nights asking himself: "What is there in Cosette's mind?" and thinking what things she could be thinking about.

For her part, Cosette was languishing. She suffered from the absence of Marius, as she had rejoiced in his presence, in a peculiar way, without really knowing it. When Jean Valjean ceased to take her on their usual walk, her woman's instinct murmured confusedly in the depths of her heart, that she must not appear to cling to the Luxembourg; and that if it were indifferent to her, her father would take her back there. But days, weeks, and months passed away. Jean Valjean had tacitly accepted Cosette's tacit consent. She regretted it. It was too late. The day she returned to the Luxembourg, Marius was no longer there. Marius then had disappeared; it was all over; what could she do? Would she ever find him again?

Still she did not let Jean Valjean see anything, except her paleness. She kept her face sweet for him.

This paleness was more than sufficient to make Jean Valjean anxious. Sometimes he asked her:

"What is the matter with you?"

She answered:

"Nothing."

And after a silence, as she felt that he was sad also, she continued:

"And you, father, is not something the matter with you?"

"Me? nothing," said he.

These two beings, who had loved each other so exclusively, and with so touching a love, and who had lived so long for each other, were now suffering by each other, and through each other; without speaking of it, without harsh feeling, and smiling the while.

THE CHAIN

The more unhappy of the two was Jean Valjean. Youth, even in its sorrows, always has a brilliancy of its own.

At certain moments, Jean Valjean suffered so much that he became puerile. It is the peculiarity of grief to bring out the childish side of man. He felt irresistibly that Cosette was escaping him. He would have been glad to put forth an effort, to hold her fast, to rouse her enthusiasm by something external and striking. These ideas, puerile, as we have just said, and at the same time senile, gave him by their very childishness a just idea of the influence of gewgaws over the imagination of young girls. He chanced once to see a general pass in the street on horseback in full uniform, Count Coutard, Commandant of Paris. He envied this gilded man; he thought what happiness it would be to be able to put on that coat which was an incontestable thing, that if Cosette saw him thus it would dazzle her, that when he should give his arm to Cosette and pass before the gate of the Tuileries they would present arms to him, and that that would so satisfy Cosette that it would destroy her inclination to look at the young men.

An unexpected shock came to him in the midst of these sad thoughts.

In the isolated life which they were leading, and since they had come to live in Rue Plumet, they had formed a habit. They sometimes made a pleasure excursion to go and see the sun rise, a gentle joy suited to those who are entering upon life and those who are leaving it.

Even after their life had been saddened, they continued their habit of morning walks.

So one October morning, tempted by the deep serenity of the autumn of 1831, they had gone out, and found themselves at daybreak near the Barrière du Maine. All was peace and silence; nobody upon the highway; on the footpaths a few scattered working-men, hardly visible, going to their work.

Jean Valjean was seated in the side walk, upon some timbers lying by the gate of a lumber-yard. He had his face turned towards the road, and his back towards the light; he had forgotten the sun which was just rising; he had fallen into one of those deep meditations in which the whole mind is absorbed, which even imprison the sense, and which are equivalent to four walls.

Suddenly, Cosette exclaimed: "Father, I should think somebody was coming down there." Jean Valjean looked up.

Cosette was right.

The highway which leads to the ancient Barrière du Maine is a prolongation, as everybody knows, of the Rue de Sèvres, and is intersected at a right angle by the interior boulevard. At the corner of the highway and the boulevard, at the point where they diverge, a sound was heard, difficult of explanation at such an hour, and a kind of moving confusion appeared. Some shapeless thing which came from the boulevard was entering upon the highway.

It grew larger, it seemed to move in order, stil it was bristling and quivering; it looked like a waggon, but they could not make out the load. There were horses, wheels, cries; whips were cracking. By degrees the features became definite, although enveloped in darkness. It was in fact a waggon which had just turned out of the boulevard into the road, and which was making its way towards the barrière, near which Jean Valjean was; a second, of the same appearance, followed it, then a third, then a fourth; seven vehicles turned in in succession, the horses' heads touching the rear of the waggons. Dark forms were moving upon these waggons, flashes were seen in the twilight as if of drawn swords, a clanking was heard which resembled the rattling of chains; it advanced, the voices grew louder, and it was as terrible a thing as comes forth from the cavern of dreams.

As it approached it took form, and outlined itself behind the trees with the pallor of an apparition; the mass whitened; daylight, which was rising little by little, spread a pallid gleam over this crawling thing, which was at once sepulchral and alive, the heads of the shadows became the faces of corpses, and it was this:

Seven waggons were moving in file upon the road. Six of them were of a peculiar structure. They resembled coopers' drays; they were a sort of long ladder placed upon two wheels, forming thills at the forward end. Each dray, or better, each ladder, was drawn by four horses tandem. Upon these ladders strange clusters of men were carried. In the little light that there was, these men were not seen, they were only guessed. Twenty-four on each waggon, twelve on each side, back to back, their faces towards the passers-by, their legs hanging down, these men were travelling thus; and they had behind them something which clanked and which was a chain, and at their necks something which shone and which was an iron collar. Each had his collar, but the chain was for all; so that these twenty-four men, if they should chance to get down from the dray and walk, would be made subject to a sort of inexorable unity, and have to wriggle over the ground with the chain for a backbone, very much like centipedes. In front and rear of each waggon, two men, armed with muskets, stood, each having an end of the chain under his foot. The collars were square. The seventh waggon, a huge cart with racks, but without a cover, had four wheels and six horses, and carried a resounding pile of iron kettles, melting pots, furnaces, and chains, over which were scattered a number of men, who were bound and lying at full length, and who appeared to be sick. This cart, entirely exposed to view, was furnished with broken hurdles which seemed to have served in the ancient punishments.

These waggons kept the middle of the street. At either side marched a row of guards of infamous appearance, wearing three-pronged hats like the soldiers of the Directory, stained, torn, filthy, muffled up in Invalides' uniforms and hearse-boys' trousers, half grey and half blue, almost in tatters, with red epaulets, yellow cross-belts, sheath-knives, muskets, and clubs: a species of servant-soldiers. These sbirri seemed a compound of the abjectness of the beggar and the authority of the executioner. The one who appeared to be their chief had a horsewhip in his hand. All these details, blurred by the twilight, were becoming clearer and clearer in the growing light. At the head and the rear of the convoy, gendarmes marched on horseback, solemn, and with drawn swords.

This cortège was so long that when the first waggon reached the barrière, the last had hardly turned out of the boulevard.

A crowd, come from nobody knows where, and gathered in a twinkling, as is frequently the case in Paris, were pushing along the two sides of the highway and looking on. In the neighbouring lanes there were heard people shouting and calling each other, and the wooden shoes of the market gardeners who were running to see.

The men heaped upon the drays were silent as they were jolted along. They were livid with the chill of the morning. They all had tow trousers, and their bare feet in wooden shoes. The rest of their costume was according to the fancy of misery. Their dress was hideously variegated: nothing is more dismal than the harlequin of rags. Felt hats jammed out of shape, glazed caps, horrible cloth caps, and beside the linen monkey-jacket, the black coat out at the elbows; several had women's hats; others had baskets on their heads; hairy breasts could be seen, and through the holes in their clothing tattooings could be discerned; temples of love, burning hearts, cupids, eruptions, and red sores could also be seen. Two or three had a rope of straw fixed to the bars of the dray, and hung beneath them like a stirrup, which sustained their feet. One of them held in his hand and carried to his mouth something which looked like a black stone, which he seemed to be gnawing; it was bread which he was eating. There were none but dry eyes among them; they were rayless, or lighted with an evil light. The troop of escort was cursing, the chained did not whisper; from time to time there was heard the sound of the blow of a club upon their shoulders or their heads; some of these men were yawning; their rags were terrible; their feet hung down, their shoulders swung, their heads struck together, their irons rattled, their eyes glared fiercely, their fists were clenched or opened inertly like the hands of the dead; behind the convoy a troop of children were bursting with laughter.

This file of waggons, whatever it was, was dismal. It was evident that to-morrow, that in an hour, a shower might spring up, that it would be followed by another, and another, and that the worn-out clothing would be soaked through, that once wet, these men would never get dry, that once chilled, they would never get warm again, that their tow trousers would be fastened to their skin by the rain, that water would fill their wooden shoes, that blows of the whip could not prevent the chattering of their jaws, that the chain would continue to hold them by the neck, that their feet would continue to swing; and it was impossible not to shudder at seeing these human creatures thus bound and passive under the chilling clouds of autumn, and given up to the rain, to the wind, to all the fury of the elements, like trees and stones.

The clubs did not spare even the sick, who lay tied with ropes and motionless in the seventh waggon, and who seemed to have been thrown there like sacks filled with misery.

Jean Valjean's eye had become frightful. It was no longer an eye; it was that deep window, which takes the place of the look in certain unfortunate beings, who seem unconscious of reality, and from which flashes out the reflection of horrors and catastrophes. He was not looking upon a sight; a vision was appearing to him. He endeavoured to rise, to flee, to escape; he could not move a limb. Sometimes things which you see, clutch you and hold you. He was spell-bound, stupefied, petrified, asking himself, through a vague unutterable anguish, what was the meaning of this sepulchral persecution, and whence came this pandemonium which was pursuing him. All at once he raised his hand to his forehead, a common gesture with those to whom memory suddenly returns; he remembered that this was really the route, that this detour was usual to avoid meeting the king, which was always possible on the Fontainebleau road, and that, thirty-five years before, he had passed through this barrière.

Cosette, though from another cause, was equally terrified. She did not comprehend; her breath failed her; what she saw did not seem possible to her; at last she exclaimed:

"Father! what can there be in those waggons?"

Jean Valjean answered:

"Convicts."

"And where are they going?"

"To the galleys."

At this moment the cudgelling, multiplied by a hundred hands, reached its climax; blows with the flat of the sword joined in; it was a fury of whips and clubs; the galley slaves crouched down, a hideous obedience was produced by the punishment, and all were silent with the look of chained wolves. Cosette trembled in every limb; she continued:

"Father, are they still men?"

"Sometimes," said the wretched man.

It was in fact the chain which, setting out before day from Bicêtre, took the Mans road to avoid Fontainebleau, where the king then was. This detour made the terrible journey last three or four days longer; but to spare the royal person the sight of the punishment, it may well be prolonged.

Jean Valjean returned home overwhelmed. Such encounters are shocks, and the memory which they leave resembles a convulsion.

Jean Valjean, however, on the way back to the Rue de Babylone with Cosette, did not notice that she asked him other questions regarding what they had just seen; perhaps he was himself too much absorbed in his own dejection to heed her words or to answer them. But at night, as Cosette was leaving him to go to bed, he heard her say in an undertone, and as if talking to herself: "It seems to me that if I should meet one of those men in my path, O my God, I should die just from seeing him near me!"

Fortunately it happened that on the morrow of this tragic day there were, in consequence of some official celebration, fêtes in Paris, a review in the Champ de Mars, rowing matches upon the Seine, theatricals in the Champs Elysées, fireworks at l'Etoile, illuminations everywhere. Jean Valjean, doing violence to his habits, took Cosette to these festivities, for the purpose of diverting her mind from the memories of the day before, and of effacing under the laughing tumult of all Paris, the abominable thing which had passed before her. The review, which enlivened the fête, made the display of uniforms quite natural; Jean Valjean put on his National Guard uniform with the vague interior feeling of a man who is taking refuge. Yet the object of this walk seemed attained. Cosette, whose law it was to please her father, and for whom, moreover, every sight was new, accepted the diversion with the easy and blithe grace of youth, and did not look disdainfully upon that promiscuous bowl of joy which is called a public fête; so that Jean Valjean could believe that he had succeeded, and that no trace remained of the hideous vision.

BOOK III—AID FROM BELOW MAY BE AID FROM ABOVE

WOUND WITHOUT, CURE WITHIN

Thus their life gradually darkened.

There was left to them but one distraction, and this had formerly been a pleasure: that was to carry bread to those who were hungry, and clothing to those who were cold. In these visits to the poor, in which Cosette often accompanied Jean Valjean, they found some remnant of their former lightheartedness; and, sometimes, when they had had a good day, when many sorrows had been relieved and many little children revived and made warm, Cosette, in the evening, was a little gay. It was at this period that they visited the Jondrette den.

The day after that visit, Jean Valjean appeared in the cottage in the morning, with his ordinary calmness, but with a large wound on his left arm, very much inflamed and very venomous, which resembled a burn, and which he explained in some fashion. This wound confined him within doors more than a month with fever. He would see no physician. When Cosette urged it: "Call the dog-doctor," said he.

Cosette dressed it night and morning with so divine a grace and so angelic a pleasure in being useful to him, that Jean Valjean felt all his old happiness return, his fears and his anxieties dissipate, and he looked upon Cosette, saying: "Oh! the good wound! Oh! the kind hurt!"

Cosette, as her father was sick, had deserted the summer-house, and regained her taste for the little lodge and the backyard. She spent almost all her time with Jean Valjean, and read to him the books which he liked. In general, books of travels. Jean Valjean was born anew; his happiness revived with inexpressible radiance; the Luxembourg, the unknown young prowler, Cosette's coldness, all these clouds of his soul faded away. He now said to himself: "I imagined all that. I am an old fool."

His happiness was so great, that the frightful discovery of the Thénardiers, made in the Jondrette den, and so unexpectedly, had in some sort glided over him. He had succeeded in escaping; his trace was lost, what mattered the rest! he thought of it only to grieve over those wretches. "They are now in prison, and can do no harm in future," thought he, "but what a pitiful family in distress!"

As to the hideous vision of the Barrière du Maine, Cosette had never mentioned it again.

At the convent, Sister Sainte Mechthilde had taught Cosette music. Cosette had the voice of a warbler with a soul, and sometimes in the evening, in the humble lodging of the wounded man, she sang plaintive songs which rejoiced Jean Valjean.

Spring came, the garden was so wonderful at that season of the year, that Jean Valjean said to Cosette: "You never go there, I wish you would walk in it." "As you will, father," said Cosette.

And, out of obedience to her father, she resumed her walks in the garden, oftenest alone, for, as we have remarked, Jean Valjean, who probably dreaded being seen through the gate, hardly ever went there.

Jean Valjean's wound had been a diversion.

When Cosette saw that her father was suffering less, and that he was getting well, and that he seemed happy, she felt a contentment that she did not even notice, so gently and naturally did it come upon her. It was then the month of March, the days were growing longer, winter was departing, winter always carries with it something of our sadness; then April came, that daybreak of summer, fresh like every dawn, gay like every childhood; weeping a little sometimes like the infant that it is. Nature in this month has charming gleams which pass from the sky, the clouds, the trees, the fields, and the flowers, into the heart of man.

Cosette was still too young for this April joy, which resembled her, not to find its way to her heart. Insensibly, and without a suspicion on her part, the darkness passed away from her mind. In the spring it becomes light in sad souls, as at noon it becomes light in cellars. And Cosette was not now very sad. So it was, however, but she did not notice it. In the morning, about ten o'clock, after breakfast, when she had succeeded in enticing her father into the garden for a quarter of an hour, and while she was walking in the sun in front of the steps, supporting his wounded arm, she did not perceive that she was laughing every moment, and that she was happy.

Jean Valjean saw her, with intoxication, again become fresh and rosy.

"Oh! the blessed wound!" repeated he in a whisper.

And he was grateful to the Thénardiers.

As soon as his wound was cured, he resumed his solitary and twilight walks.

It would be a mistake to believe that one can walk in this way alone in the uninhabited regions of Paris, and not meet with some adventure.

MOTHER PLUTARCH IS NOT EMBARRASSED ON THE EXPLANATION OF A PHENOMENON

One evening the little gamin Gavroche had had no dinner; he remembered that he had had no dinner also the day before; this was becoming tiresome. He resolved that he would try for some supper. He went wandering about beyond La Salpêtrière, in the deserted spots; those are the places for good luck; where there is nobody, can be found something. He came to a settlement which appeared to him to be the village of Austerlitz.

In one of his preceding strolls, he had noticed an old garden there haunted by an old man and an old woman, and in this garden a passable apple tree. Beside this apple tree, there was a sort of fruit-loft poorly inclosed where the conquest of an apple might be made. An apple is a supper; an apple is life. What ruined Adam might save Gavroche. The garden was upon a solitary lane unpaved and bordered with bushes for lack of houses; a hedge separated it from the lane.

Gavroche directed his steps towards the garden; he found the lane, he recognised the apple tree, he verified the fruit-loft, he examined the hedge; a hedge is a stride. Day was declining, not a cat in the lane, the time was good. Gavroche sketched out the escalade, then suddenly stopped. Somebody was talking in the garden. Gavroche looked through one of the openings of the hedge.

Within two steps of him, at the foot of the hedge on the other side, precisely at the point where the hole he was meditating would have taken him, lay a stone which made a kind of seat, and on this seat the old man of the garden was sitting with the old woman standing before him. The old woman was muttering. Gavroche, who was anything but discreet, listened.

"Monsieur Mabeuf!" said the old woman.

"Mabeuf!" thought Gavroche, "that is a funny name."

The old man who was addressed made no motion. The old woman repeated:

"Monsieur Mabeuf."

The old man, without raising his eyes from the ground, determined to answer:

"What, Mother Plutarch?"

"Mother Plutarch!" thought Gavroche, "another funny name."

Mother Plutarch resumed, and the old man was forced to enter into the conversation:

"The landlord is dissatisfied."

"Why so?"

"There are three quarters due."

"In three months there will be four."

"He says that he will turn you out of doors to sleep."

"I shall go."

"The grocery woman wants to be paid. She holds on to her wood. What will you keep warm with this winter? We shall have no wood."

"There is the sun."

"The butcher refuses credit, he will not give us any more meat."

"That is all right. I do not digest meat well. It is too heavy."

"What shall we have for dinner?"

"Bread."

"The baker demands something on account, and says no money, no bread."

"Very well."

"What will you eat?"

"We have the apples from the apple tree."

"But, monsieur, we can't live like that without money."

"I have not any."

The old woman went away, the old man remained alone. He began to reflect. Gavroche was reflecting on his side. It was almost night.

The first result of Gavroche's reflection was that instead of climbing over the hedge he crept under. The branches separated a little at the bottom of the bushes.

"Heigho," exclaimed Gavroche internally, "an alcove!" and he hid in it. He almost touched Father Mabeuf's seat. He heard the octogenarian breathe.

Then, for dinner, he tried to sleep.

Sleep of a cat, sleep with one eye. Even while crouching there Gavroche kept watch.

The whiteness of the twilight sky blanched the earth, and the lane made a livid line between two rows of dusky bushes.

Suddenly, upon that whitened band two dim forms appeared. One came before—the other, at some distance, behind.

"There are two fellows," growled Gavroche.

The first form seemed some old bourgeois bent and thoughtful, dressed more than simply, walking with the slow pace of an aged man, and taking his ease in the starry evening.

The second was straight, firm, and slight. It regulated its step by the step of the first; but in the unwonted slowness of the gait, dexterity and agility were manifest. This form had, in addition to something wild and startling, the whole appearance of what was then called a dandy; the hat was of the latest style, the coat was black, well cut, probably of fine cloth, and closely fitted to the form. The head was held up with a robust grace, and, under the hat, could be seen in the twilight the pale profile of a young man. This profile had a rose in its mouth. The second form was well known to Gavroche: it was Montparnasse.

As to the other, he could have said nothing about it, except that it was an old goodman.

Gavroche immediately applied himself to observation.

One of these two passers evidently had designs upon the other. Gavroche was well situated to see the issue. The alcove had very conveniently become a hiding-place.

Montparnasse hiding, at such an hour, in such a place—it was threatening. Gavroche felt his *gamin's* heart moved with pity for the old man.

What could he do? intervene? one weakness in aid of another? That would be ludicrous to Montparnasse. Gavroche could not conceal it from himself that, to this formidable bandit of eighteen, the old man first, the child afterwards, would be but two mouthfuls.

While Gavroche was deliberating, the attack was made, sharp and hideous. The attack of a tiger on a wild ass, a spider on a fly. Montparnasse, on a sudden, threw away the rose, sprang upon the old man, collared him, grasped him and fastened to him, and Gavroche could hardly restrain a cry. A moment afterwards, one of these men was under the other, exhausted, panting, struggling, with a knee of marble upon his breast. Only it was not altogether as Gavroche had expected. The one on the ground was Montparnasse; the one above was the goodman. All this happened a few steps from Gavroche.

The old man had received the shock, and had returned it, and returned it so terribly that in the twinkling of an eye the assailant and assailed had changed parts.

"There is a brave Invalide!" thought Gavroche.

And he could not help clapping his hands. But it was a clapping of hands thrown away. It did not reach the two combatants, absorbed and deafened by each other, and mingling their breath in the contest.

There was silence. Montparnasse ceased to struggle. Gavroche said this aside: "Can he be dead?"

The goodman had not spoken a word, nor uttered a cry. He arose, and Gavroche heard him say to Montparnasse:

"Get up."

Montparnasse got up, but the goodman held him. Montparnasse had the humiliated and furious attitude of a wolf caught by a sheep.

Gavroche looked and listened, endeavouring to double his eyes by his ears. He was enormously amused.

He was rewarded for his conscientious anxiety as a spectator. He was able to seize upon the wing the following dialogue, which borrowed a strangely tragic tone from the darkness. The goodman questioned. Montparnasse responded.

"How old are you?"

"Nineteen."

"You are strong and well. Why don't you work?"

"It is fatiguing."

"What is your business?"

"Loafer."

"Speak seriously. Can I do anything for you? What would you like to be?"

"A robber."

There was a silence. The old man seemed to be thinking deeply. He was motionless, yet did not release Montparnasse.

From time to time the young bandit, vigorous and nimble, made the efforts of a beast caught in a snare. He gave a spring, attempted a trip, twisted his limbs desperately, endeavoured to escape. The old man did not appear to perceive it, and with a single hand held his two arms with the sovereign indifference of absolute strength.

The old man's reverie continued for some time, then, looking steadily upon Montparnasse, he gently raised his voice and addressed to him, in that obscurity in which they were, a sort of solemn allocution of which Gavroche did not lose a syllable:

"My child, you are entering by laziness into the most laborious of existences. Ah! you declare yourself a loafer! prepare to labour. Have you seen a terrible machine called the rolling-mill? Beware of it, it is a cunning and ferocious thing; if it but catch the skirt of your coat, you are drawn in entirely. This machine is idleness. Stop, while there is yet time, and save yourself! otherwise, it is all over; you will soon be between the wheels. Once caught, hope for nothing more. To fatigue, idler! no more rest. The implacable iron hand of labour has seized you. Earn a living, have a task, accomplish a duty, you do not wish it! To be like others is tiresome! Well! you will be different. Labour is the law; he who spurns it as tiresome will have it as a punishment. You are unwilling to be a working-man, you will be a slave. Labour releases you on the one hand only to retake you on the other; you are unwilling to be her friend, you will be her negro. Ah! you have refused the honest weariness of men, you shall have the sweat of the damned. While others sing, you will rave. You will see from afar, from below, other men at work; it will seem to you that they are at rest. The labourer, the reaper, the sailor, the blacksmith, will appear to you in the light like the blessed in a paradise. Oh! my child, you are taking a mistaken road, laziness is giving you bad advice; the hardest of all labour is robbery. Trust me, do not undertake this dreadful drudgery of being an idler. To become a rascal is not comfortable. It is not so hard to be an honest man. Go, now, and think of what I have said to you. And now, what did you want of me? my purse? here it is."

And the old man, releasing Montparnasse, put his purse in his hand, which Montparnasse weighed for a moment; after which, with the same mechanical precaution as if he had stolen it, Montparnasse let it slide gently into the back pocket of his coat.

All this said and done, the goodman turned his back and quietly resumed his walk.

"Blockhead!" murmured Montparnasse.

Who was this goodman? the reader has doubtless guessed.

Montparnasse, in stupefaction, watched him till he disappeared in the twilight. This contemplation was fatal to him.

While the old man was moving away, Gavroche was approaching.

Gavroche, with a side glance, made sure that Father Mabeuf, perhaps asleep, was still sitting on the seat. Then the urchin came out of his bushes, and began to creep along in the shade, behind the motionless Montparnasse. He reached Montparnasse thus without being seen or heard, gently insinuated his hand into the back pocket of the fine black cloth coat, took the purse, withdrew his hand, and, creeping off again, glided away like an adder into the darkness. Montparnasse, who had no reason to be upon his guard, and who was reflecting for the first time in his life, perceived nothing of it. Gavroche, when he had reached the point where Father Mabeuf was, threw the purse over the hedge, and fled at full speed.

The purse fell on the foot of Father Mabeuf. This shock awoke him. He stooped down, and picked up the purse. He did not understand it at all, and he opened it. It was a purse with two compartments; in one there were some small coins; in the other, there were six napoleons.

M. Mabeuf, very much startled, carried the thing to his governess.

"This falls from the sky," said Mother Plutarch.

BOOK IV—THE END OF WHICH IS UNLIKE THE BEGINNING

FEARS OF COSETTE

In the first fortnight in April, Jean Valjean went on a journey. This, we know, happened with him from time to time, at very long intervals. He remained absent one or two days at the most. Where did he go? nobody knew, not even Cosette. Once only, on one of these trips, she had accompanied him in a fiacre as far as the corner of a little cul-de-sac, on which she read: *Impasse de la Planchette.* There he got out, and the fiacre took Cosette back to the Rue de Babylone. It was generally when money was needed for the household expenses that Jean Valjean made these little journeys.

Jean Valjean then was absent. He had said: "I shall be back in three days."

In the evening, Cosette was alone in the parlour. To amuse herself, she had opened her piano and began to sing, playing an accompaniment, the chorus from Euryanthe: *Hunters wandering in the woods!* which is perhaps the finest piece in all music.

All at once it seemed to her that she heard a step in the garden.

It could not be her father, he was absent; it could not be Toussaint, she was in bed. It was ten o'clock at night.

She went to the window shutter which was closed and put her ear to it.

It appeared to her that it was a man's step, and that he was treading very softly.

She ran immediately up to the first story, into her room, opened a slide in her blind, and looked into the garden. The moon was full. She could see as plainly as in broad day.

There was nobody there.

She opened the window. The garden was absolutely silent, and all that she could see of the street was as deserted as it always was.

Cosette thought she had been mistaken. She had imagined she heard this noise. It was a hallucination produced by Weber's sombre and majestic chorus, which opens before the mind startling depths, which trembles before the eye like a bewildering forest, and in which we hear the crackling of the dead branches beneath the anxious step of the hunters dimly seen in the twilight.

She thought no more about it.

Moreover, Cosette by nature was not easily startled. There was in her veins the blood of the gipsy and of the adventuress who goes barefoot. It must be remembered she was rather a lark than a dove. She was wild and brave at heart.

The next day, not so late, at nightfall, she was walking in the garden. In the midst of the confused thoughts which filled her mind, she thought she heard for a moment a sound like the sound of the evening before, as if somebody were walking in the darkness under the trees, not very far from her, but she said to herself that nothing is more like a step in the grass than the rustling of two limbs against each other, and she paid no attention to it. Moreover, she saw nothing.

She left "the bush;" she had to cross a little green grass-plot to reach the steps. The moon, which had just risen behind her, projected, as Cosette came out from the shrubbery, her shadow before her upon this grass-plot.

Cosette stood still, terrified.

By the side of her shadow, the moon marked out distinctly upon the sward another shadow singularly frightful and terrible, a shadow with a round hat.

It was like the shadow of a man who might have been standing in the edge of the shrubbery, a few steps behind Cosette.

For a moment she was unable to speak, or cry, or call, or stir, or turn her head.

At last she summoned up all her courage and resolutely turned round.

There was nobody there.

She looked upon the ground. The shadow had disappeared.

She returned into the shrubbery, boldly hunted through the corners, went as far as the gate, and found nothing.

She felt her blood run cold. Was this also a hallucination? What! two days in succession? One hallucination may pass, but two hallucinations? What made her most anxious was that the shadow was certainly not a phantom. Phantoms never wear round hats.

The next day Jean Valjean returned. Cosette narrated to him what she thought she had heard and seen. She expected to be reassured, and that her father would shrug his shoulders and say: "You are a foolish little girl."

Jean Valjean became anxious.

"It may be nothing," said he to her.

He left her under some pretext and went into the garden, and she saw him examining the gate very closely.

In the night she awoke; now she was certain, and she distinctly heard somebody walking very near the steps under her window. She ran to her slide and opened it. There was in fact a man in the garden with a big club in his hand. Just as she was about to cry out, the moon lighted up the man's face. It was her father.

She went back to bed, saying: "So he is really anxious!"

Jean Valjean passed that night in the garden and the two nights following. Cosette saw him through the hole in her shutter.

The third night the moon was smaller and rose later, it might have been one o'clock in the morning, she heard a loud burst of laughter and her father's voice calling her:

"Cosette!"

She sprang out of bed, threw on her dressing-gown, and opened her window.

Her father was below on the grass-plot.

"I woke you up to show you," said he. "Look, here is your shadow in a round hat."

And he pointed to a shadow on the sward made by the moon, and which really bore a close resemblance to the appearance of a man in a round hat. It was a figure produced by a sheet-iron stove-pipe with a cap, which rose above a neighbouring roof.

Cosette also began to laugh, all her gloomy suppositions fell to the ground, and the next day, while breakfasting with her father, she made merry over the mysterious garden haunted by shadows of stove-pipes.

Jean Valjean became entirely calm again; as to Cosette, she did not notice very carefully whether the stove-pipe was really in the direction of the shadow which she had seen, or thought she saw, and whether the moon was in the same part of the sky. She made no question about the oddity of a stove-pipe which is afraid of being caught in the act, and which retires when you look at its shadow, for the shadow had disappeared when Cosette turned round, and Cosette had really believed that she was certain of that. Cosette was fully reassured. The demonstration appeared to her complete, and the idea that there could have been anybody walking in the garden that evening, or that night, no longer entered her head.

A few days afterwards, however, a new incident occurred.

ENRICHED BY THE COMMENTARIES OF TOUSSAINT

In the garden, near the grated gate, on the street, there was a stone seat protected from the gaze of the curious by a hedge, but which, nevertheless, by an effort, the arm of a passer could reach through the grating and the hedge.

One evening in this same month of April, Jean Valjean had gone out; Cosette, after sunset, had sat down on this seat. The wind was freshening in the trees, Cosette was musing; a vague sadness was coming over her little by little, that invincible sadness which evening gives and which comes perhaps, who knows? from the mystery of the tomb half-opened at that hour.

Cosette rose, slowly made the round of the garden, walking in the grass which was wet with dew, and saying to herself through the kind of melancholy somnambulism in which she was enveloped: "One really needs wooden shoes for the garden at this hour. I shall catch cold."

She returned to the seat.

Just as she was sitting down, she noticed in the place she had left a stone of considerable size which evidently was not there the moment before.

Cosette reflected upon this stone, asking herself what it meant. Suddenly, the idea that this stone did not come upon the seat of itself, that somebody had put it there, that an arm had passed through that grating, this idea came to her and made her afraid. It was a genuine fear this time; there was the stone. No doubt was possible, she did not touch it, fled without daring to look behind her, took refuge in the house, and immediately shut the glass-door of the stairs with shutter, bar, and bolt. She asked Toussaint:

"Has my father come in?"

"Not yet, mademoiselle."

Jean Valjean, a man given to thought and a night-walker, frequently did not return till quite late.

"Toussaint," resumed Cosette, "you are careful in the evening to bar the shutters well, upon the garden at least, and to really put the little iron things into the little rings which fasten?"

"Oh! never fear, mademoiselle."

Toussaint did not fail, and Cosette well knew it, but she could not help adding:

"Because it is so solitary about here!"

"For that matter," said Toussaint, "that is true. We would be assassinated before we would have time to say Boo! And then, monsieur doesn't sleep in the house. But don't be afraid, mademoiselle, I fasten the windows like Bastilles. Lone women! I am sure it is enough to make us shudder! Just imagine it! to see men come into the room at night and say to you: Hush! and set themselves to cutting your throat. It isn't so much the dying, people die, that is all right, we know very well that we must die, but it is the horror of having such people touch you. And then their knives, they must cut badly! O God!"

"Be still," said Cosette. "Fasten everything well."

Cosette, dismayed by the melodrama improvised by Toussaint, and perhaps also by the memory of the apparitions of the previous week which came back to her, did not even dare to say to her: "Go and look at the stone which somebody has laid on the seat!" for fear of opening the garden door again, and lest "the men" would come in. She had all the doors and windows carefully closed, made Toussaint go over the whole house from cellar to garret, shut herself up in her room, drew her bolts, looked under her bed, lay down, and slept badly. All night she saw the stone big as a mountain and full of caves.

At sunrise—the peculiarity of sunrise is to make us laugh at all our terrors of the night, and our laugh is always proportioned to the fear we have had—at sunrise Cosette, on waking, looked upon her fright as upon a nightmare, and said to herself: "What have I been dreaming about? This is like those steps which I thought I heard at night last week in the garden! it is like the shadow of the stove-pipe! And am I going to be a coward now!"

The sun, which shone through the cracks of her shutters, and made the damask curtains purple, reassured her to such an extent that it all vanished from her thoughts, even the stone.

"There was no stone on the bench, any more than there was a man with a round hat in the garden; I dreamed the stone as I did the rest."

She dressed herself, went down to the garden, ran to the bench, and felt a cold sweat. The stone was there.

But this was only for a moment. What is fright by night is curiosity by day.

"Pshaw!" said she, "now let us see."

She raised the stone, which was pretty large. There was something underneath which resembled a letter.

It was a white paper envelope. Cosette seized it; there was no address on the one side, no wafer on the other. Still the envelope, although open, was not empty. Papers could be seen in it.

Cosette examined it. There was no more fright, there was curiosity no more; there was a beginning of anxious interest.

Cosette took out of the envelope what it contained, a quire of paper, each page of which was numbered and contained a few lines written in a rather pretty hand-writing, thought Cosette, and very fine.

Cosette looked for a name, there was none; a signature, there was none. To whom was it addressed? to her probably, since a hand had placed the packet upon her seat. From whom did it come? An irresistible fascination took possession of her, she endeavoured to turn her eyes away from these leaves which trembled in her hand, she looked at the sky, the street, the acacias all steeped in light, some pigeons which were flying about a neighbouring roof, then all at once her eye eagerly sought the manuscript, and she said to herself that she must know what there was in it.

This is what she read:

A HEART UNDER A STONE

The reduction of the universe to a single being, the expansion of a single being even to God, this is love.

Love is the salutation of the angel to the stars.

How sad is the soul when it is sad from love!

Oh! to be laid side by side in the same tomb, hand clasped in hand, and from time to time, in the darkness, to caress a finger gently, that would suffice for my eternity.

You who suffer because you love, love still more. To die of love, is to live by it.

Love. A sombre starry transfiguration is mingled with this crucifixion. There is ecstasy in the agony.

O joy of the birds! it is because they have their nest that they have their song.

Love is a celestial respiration of the air of paradise.

I met in the street a very poor young man who was in love. His hat was old, his coat was threadbare—there were holes at his elbows; the water passed through his shoes and the stars through his soul.

COSETTE AFTER THE LETTER

During the reading, Cosette entered gradually into reverie.

She began again to contemplate the letter. It was written in a ravishing hand-writing, thought Cosette; in the same hand, but with different inks, sometimes very black, sometimes pale, as ink is put into the ink-stand, and consequently on different days. It was then a thought which had poured itself out there, sigh by sigh, irregularly, without order, without choice, without aim, at hazard. Cosette had never read anything like it.

Now these pages, from whom could they come? Who could have written them?

Cosette did not hesitate for a moment. One single man.

He!

She fled, went back to the house and shut herself up in her room to read over the manuscript again, to learn it by heart, and to muse. When she had read it well, she kissed it, and put it in her bosom.

It was done. Cosette had fallen back into the profound seraphic love. The abyss of Eden had reopened.

THE OLD ARE MADE TO GO OUT WHEN CONVENIENT

When evening came, Jean Valjean went out; Cosette dressed herself. She arranged her hair in the manner which best became her, and she put on a dress the neck of which, as it had received one cut of the scissors too much, and as, by this slope, it allowed the turn of the neck to be seen, was, as young girls say, "a little immodest."

It was not the least in the world immodest, but it was prettier than otherwise. She did all this without knowing why.

Did she intend to go out? no.

Did she expect a visit? no.

At dusk, she went down to the garden. Toussaint was busy in her kitchen, which looked out upon the back-yard.

She began to walk under the branches, putting them aside with her hand from time to time, because there were some that were very low.

She thus reached the seat.

The stone was still there.

She sat down, and laid her soft white hand upon that stone as if she would caress it and thank it.

All at once, she had that indefinable impression which we feel, though we see nothing, when there is somebody standing behind us.

She turned her head and arose.

It was he.

He was bareheaded. He appeared pale and thin. She hardly discerned his black dress. The twilight dimmed his fine forehead, and covered his eyes with darkness. He had, under a veil of incomparable sweetness, something of death and of night. His face was lighted by the light of a dying day, and by the thought of a departing soul.

It seemed as if he was not yet a phantom, and was now no longer a man.

His hat was lying a few steps distant in the shrubbery.

Cosette, ready to faint, did not utter a cry. She drew back slowly, for she felt herself attracted forward. He did not stir. Through the sad and ineffable something which enwrapped him, she felt the look of his eyes, which she did not see.

Cosette, in retreating, encountered a tree, and leaned against it. But for this tree, she would have fallen.

Then she heard his voice, that voice which she had never really heard, hardly rising above the rustling of the leaves, and murmuring:

"Pardon me, I am here. My heart is bursting, I could not live as I was, I have come. Have you read what I placed there, on this seat? do you recognise me at all? do not be afraid of me. It is a long time now, do you remember the day when you looked upon me? it was at the Luxembourg, near the Gladiator. And the day when you passed me? it was the 16th of June and the 2nd of July. It will soon be a year. For a very long time now, I have not seen you at all. I asked the chairkeeper, she told me that she saw you no more. You lived in the Rue de l'Ouest, on the third floor front, in a new house, you see that I know! I followed you. What was I to do? And then you disappeared. I thought I saw you pass once when I was reading the papers under the arches of the Odéon. I ran. But no. It was a person who had a hat like yours. At night, I come here. Do not be afraid, nobody sees me. I come for a near look at your windows. I walk very softly that you may not hear, for perhaps you would be afraid. The other evening I was behind you, you turned round, I fled. Once I heard you sing. I was happy. Does it disturb you that I should hear you sing through the shutter? it can do you no harm. It cannot, can it? See, you are my angel, let me come sometimes; I believe I am going to die. If you but knew! I adore you! Pardon me, I am talking to you, I do not know what I am saying to you, perhaps I annoy you, do I annoy you?"

"O mother!" said she.

And she sank down upon herself as if she were dying.

He caught her, she fell, he caught her in his arms, he grasped her tightly, unconscious of what he was doing. He supported her even while tottering himself. He felt as if his head were enveloped in smoke; flashes of light passed through his eyelids; his ideas vanished; it seemed to him that he was performing a religious act, and that he was committing a profanation. Moreover, he did not feel one passionate emotion for this ravishing woman, whose form he felt against his heart. He was lost in love.

She took his hand and laid it on her heart. He felt the paper there, and stammered:

"You love me, then?"

She answered in a voice so low that it was no more than a breath which could scarcely be heard:

"Hush! you know it!"

And she hid her blushing head in the bosom of the proud and intoxicated young man.

He fell upon the seat, she by his side. There were no more words.

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HE ANSWERED IN A VOICE SO LOW THAT IT WAS NO MORE THAN A BREATH WHICH COULD SCARCELY BE HEARD

The stars were beginning to shine. How was it that their lips met? How is it that the bird sings, that the snow melts, that the rose opens, that May blooms, that the dawn whitens behind the black trees on the shivering summit of the hills?

One kiss, and that was all.

Both trembled, and they looked at each other in the darkness with brilliant eyes.

They felt neither the fresh night, nor the cold stone, nor the damp ground, nor the wet grass, they looked at each other, and their hearts were full of thought. They had clasped hands, without knowing it.

She did not ask him, she did not even think of it, in what way and by what means he had succeeded in penetrating into the garden. It seemed so natural to her that he should be there?

From time to time Marius' knee touched Cosette's knee, which gave them both a thrill.

At intervals, Cosette faltered out a word. Her soul trembled upon her lips like a drop of dew upon a flower.

Gradually they began to talk. Overflow succeeded to silence, which is fulness. The night was serene and splendid above their heads. These two beings, pure as spirits, told each other all their dreams, their frenzies, their ecstasies, their chimæras, their despondencies, how they had adored each other from afar, how they had longed for each other, their despair when they had ceased to see each other. They confided to each other in an intimacy of the ideal, which even now nothing could have increased, all that was most hidden and most mysterious of themselves. They related to each other, with a candid faith in their illusions, all that love, youth, and that remnant of childhood was theirs, suggested to their thought. These two hearts poured themselves out into each other, so that at the end of an hour, it was the young man who had the young girl's soul and the young girl who had the soul of the young man. They inter-penetrated, they enchanted, they dazzled each other.

When they had finished, when they had told each other everything, she laid her head upon his shoulder, and asked him:

"What is your name?"

"My name is Marius," said he. "And yours?"

"My name is Cosette."

BOOK V—ENCHANTMENTS AND DESOLATIONS

SHADOW COMMENCES

Jean Valjean suspected nothing.

Cosette, a little less dreamy than Marius, was cheerful, and that was enough to make Jean Valjean happy. The thoughts of Cosette, her tender preoccupations, the image of Marius which filled her soul, detracted nothing from the incomparable purity of her beautiful, chaste, and smiling forehead. She was at the age when the maiden bears her love as the angel bears her lily. And then when two lovers have an understanding they always get along well; any third person who might disturb their love, is kept in perfect blindness by a very few precautions, always the same for all lovers. Thus never any objections from Cosette to Jean Valjean. Did he wish to take a walk? yes, my dear father. Did he wish to remain at home? very well. Would he spend the evening with Cosette? she was in raptures. As he always retired at ten o'clock, at such times Marius would not come to the garden till after that hour, when from the street he would hear Cosette open the glass-door leading out on the steps. We need not say that Marius was never met by day. Jean Valjean no longer even thought that Marius was in existence. Once, only, one morning, he happened to say to Cosette: "Why, you have something white on your back!" The evening before, Marius, in a transport, had pressed Cosette against the wall.

Old Toussaint, who went to bed early, thought of nothing but going to sleep, once her work was done, and was ignorant of all, like Jean Valjean.

Never did Marius set foot into the house. When he was with Cosette they hid themselves in a recess near the steps, so that they could neither be seen nor heard from the street, and they sat there, contenting themselves often, by way of conversation, with pressing each other's hands twenty times a minute while looking into the branches of the trees. At such moments, a thunderbolt might have fallen within thirty paces of them, and they would not have suspected it, so deeply was the reverie of the one absorbed and buried in the reverie of the other.

The whole garden was between them and the street. Whenever Marius came in and went out, he carefully replaced the bar of the grating in such a way that no derangement was visible.

He went away commonly about midnight, returning to Courfeyrac's.

Courfeyrac, a practical man, was not pleased at this reflection of an invisible paradise upon Marius; he had little taste for unpublished passions, he was impatient at them, and he occasionally would serve Marius with a summons to return to the real.

One morning, he threw out this admonition:

"My dear fellow, you strike me at present as being situated in the moon, kingdom of dream, province of illusion, capital Soap-Bubble. Come, be a good boy, what is her name?"

But nothing could make Marius "confess." You might have torn his nails out sooner than one of the two sacred syllables which composed that ineffable name, *Cosette.* True love is luminous as the dawn, and silent as the grave. Only there was to Courfeyrac, this change in Marius, that he had a radiant taciturnity.

During this sweet month of May, Marius and Cosette knew these transcendent joys:

To quarrel and to say monsieur and mademoiselle, merely to say Marius and Cosette better afterwards;

To talk at length, and with most minute detail, of people who did not interest them in the least; a further proof that, in this ravishing opera which is called love, the libretto is almost nothing;

For Marius, to listen to Cosette talking dress;

For Cosette, to listen to Marius talking politics;

To hear, knee touching knee, the waggons roll along the Rue de Babylone;

To gaze upon the same planet in space, or the same worm glow in the grass;

To keep silence together; a pleasure still greater than to talk;

Etc., etc.

Meanwhile various complications were approaching.

One evening Marius was making his way to the rendezvous by the Boulevard des Invalides; he usually walked with his head bent down;

as he was just turning the corner of the Rue Plumet, he heard some one saying very near him:

"Good evening, Monsieur Marius."

He looked up, and recognised Eponine.

This produced a singular effect upon him. He had not thought even once of this girl since the day she brought him to the Rue Plumet, he had not seen her again, and she had completely gone out of his mind. He had motives of gratitude only towards her; he owed his present happiness to her, and still it was annoying to him to meet her.

It is a mistake to suppose that passion, when it is fortunate and pure, leads man to a state of perfection; it leads him simply, as we have said, to a state of forgetfulness. In this situation man forgets to be bad, but he also forgets to be good. Gratitude, duty, necessary and troublesome memories, vanish. At any other time Marius would have felt very differently towards Eponine. Absorbed in Cosette, he had not even clearly in his mind that this Eponine's name was Eponine Thénardier, and that she bore a name written in his father's will, that name to which he would have been, a few months before, so ardently devoted. We show Marius just as he was. His father himself, disappeared somewhat from his soul beneath the splendour of his love.

He answered with some embarrassment:

"What! is it you, Eponine?"

"Why do you speak to me so sternly? Have I done anything to you?"

"No," answered he.

Certainly, he had nothing against her. Far from it. Only, he felt that he could not do otherwise, now that he had whispered to Cosette, than speak coldly to Eponine.

As he was silent, she exclaimed:

"Tell me now—"

Then she stopped. It seemed as if words failed this creature, once so reckless and so bold. She attempted to smile and could not. She resumed:

"Well?—"

Then she was silent again, and stood with her eyes cast down.

"Good evening, Monsieur Marius," said she all at once abruptly, and she went away.

MARIUS BECOMES SO REAL AS TO GIVE COSETTE HIS ADDRESS

NEVER had the sky been more studded with stars, or more charming, the trees more tremulous, the odour of the shrubs more penetrating; never had the birds gone to sleep in the leaves with a softer sound; never had all the harmonies of the universal serenity better responded to the interior music of love; never had Marius been more enamoured, more happy, more in ecstasy. But he had found Cosette sad. Cosette had been weeping. Her eyes were red.

It was the first cloud in this wonderful dream.

Marius' first word was:

"What is the matter?"

And she answered:

"See."

Then she sat down on the seat near the stairs, and as he took his place all trembling beside her, she continued:

"My father told me this morning to hold myself in readiness, that he had business, and that perhaps we should go away."

Marius shuddered from head to foot.

When we are at the end of life, to die means to go away; when we are at the beginning, to go away means to die.

For six weeks Marius, gradually, slowly, by degrees, had been each day taking possession of Cosette. A possession entirely ideal, but thorough. As we have entirely explained, in the first love, the soul is taken far before the body; afterwards the body is taken far before the soul; sometimes the soul is not taken at all; the Faublas and the Prudhommes add: because there is none; but the sarcasm is fortunately a blasphemy. Marius then possessed Cosette, as minds possess; but he wrapped her in his whole soul, and clasped her jealously with an incredible conviction. He possessed her smile, her breath, her perfume, the deep radiance of her blue eyes, the softness of her skin when he touched her hand, the charming mark that she had on her neck, all her thoughts. They had agreed never to go to sleep without dreaming of each other, and they had kept their word. He possessed all Cosette's dreams.

Marius awoke. For six weeks Marius had lived, as we have said, outside of life; this word, going away, brought him roughly back to it.

He could not find a word. She said to him in her turn.

"What is the matter?"

He answered so low that Cosette hardly heard him:

"I don't understand what you have said."

She resumed:

"This morning my father told me to arrange all my little affairs and to be ready, that he would give me his clothes to pack, that he was obliged to take a journey, that we were going away, that we must have a large trunk for me and a small one for him, to get all that ready within a week from now, and that we should go perhaps to England."

"But it is monstrous!" exclaimed Marius.

It is certain that at that moment, in Marius' mind, no abuse of power, no violence, no abomination of the most cruel tyrants, no action of Busiris, Tiberius, or Henry VIII., was equal in ferocity to this: M. Fauchelevent taking his daughter to England because he has business.

He asked in a feeble voice:

"And when should you start?"

"He didn't say when."

"And when should you return?"

"He didn't say when."

Marius arose, and said coldly:

"Cosette, shall you go?"

Cosette turned upon him her beautiful eyes full of anguish and answered with a sort of bewilderment:

"Where?"

"To England? shall you go?"

"Why do you speak so to me?"

"I ask you if you shall go?"

"What would you have me do?" said she, clasping her hands.

"So, you will go?"

"If my father goes?"

"So, you will go?"

Cosette took Marius' hand and pressed it without answering.

"Very well," said Marius. "Then I shall go elsewhere."

Cosette felt the meaning of this word still more than she understood it. She turned so pale that her face became white in the darkness. She stammered:

"What do you mean?"

Marius looked at her, then slowly raised his eyes towards heaven and answered:

"Nothing."

When his eyes were lowered, he saw Cosette smiling upon him. The smile of the woman whom we love has a brilliancy which we can see by night.

"How stupid we are! Marius, I have an idea."

"What?"

"Go if we go! I will tell you where! Come and join me where I am!"

Marius was now a man entirely awakened. He had fallen back into reality. He cried to Cosette:

"Go with you? are you mad? But it takes money, and I have none! Go to England? Why I owe now, I don't know, more than ten louis to Courfeyrac, one of my friends whom you do not know! Why I have an old hat which is not worth three francs, I have a coat from which some of the buttons are gone in front, my shirt is all torn, my elbows are out, my boots let in the water; for six weeks I have not thought of it, and I have not told you about it. Cosette! I am a miserable wretch. You only see me at night, and you give me your love; if you should see me by day, you would give me a sou! Go to England? Ah! I have not the means to pay for a passport!"

He threw himself against a tree which was near by, standing with his arms above his head, his forehead against the bark, feeling neither the tree which was chafing his skin, nor the fever which was hammering his temples, motionless, and ready to fall, like a statue of Despair.

He was a long time thus. One might remain through eternity in such abysses. At last he turned. He heard behind him a little stifled sound, soft and sad.

It was Cosette sobbing.

She had been weeping more than two hours while Marius had been thinking.

He came to her, fell on his knees, and, prostrating himself slowly, he took the tip of her foot which peeped from under her dress and kissed it.

She allowed it in silence. There are moments when woman accepts, like a goddess sombre and resigned, the religion of love.

"Do not weep," said he.

She murmured:

"Because I am perhaps going away, and you cannot come!"

He continued:

"Do you love me?"

She answered him by sobbing out that word of Paradise which is never more enrapturing than when it comes through tears:

"I adore you!"

He continued with a tone of voice which was an inexpressible caress:

"Do not weep. Tell me, will you do this for me, not to weep?"

"Do you love me too?" said she.

He caught her hand.

"Cosette, I have never given my word of honour to anybody, because I stand in awe of my word of honour. I feel that my father is at my side. Now, I give you my most sacred word of honour that, if you go away, I shall die."

There was in the tone with which he pronounced these words a melancholy so solemn and so quiet, that Cosette trembled. She felt that chill which is given by a stern and true fact passing over us. From the shock she ceased weeping.

"Now listen," said he, "do not expect me to-morrow."

"Why not?"

"Do not expect me till the day after to-morrow!"

"Oh! why not?"

"You will see."

"A day without seeing you! Why, that is impossible."

"Let us sacrifice one day to gain perhaps a whole life."

And Marius added in an under tone, and aside:

"He is a man who changes none of his habits, and he has never received anybody till evening."

"What man are you speaking of?" inquired Cosette.

"Me? I said nothing."

"What is it you hope for, then?"

"Wait till day after to-morrow."

"You wish it?"

"Yes, Cosette."

She took his head in both her hands, rising on tiptoe to reach his height, and striving to see his hope in his eyes.

Marius continued:

"It occurs to me, you must know my address, something may happen, we don't know; I live with that friend named Courfeyrac, Rue de la Verrerie, number 16."

He put his hand in his pocket, took out a penknife, and wrote with the blade upon the plastering of the wall:

16, *Rue de la Verrerie.*

Cosette, meanwhile, began to look into his eyes again.

"Tell me your idea. Marius, you have an idea. Tell me. Oh! tell me, so that I may pass a good night!"

"My idea is this: that it is impossible that God should wish to separate us. Expect me day after to-morrow."

"What shall I do till then?" said Cosette. "You, you are out doors, you go, you come! How happy men are. I have to stay alone. Oh! how sad I shall be! What is it you are going to do to-morrow evening, tell me?"

"I shall try a plan."

"Then I will pray God, and I will think of you from now till then, that you may succeed. I will not ask any more questions, since you wish me not to. You are my master. I shall spend my evening to-morrow singing that music of Euryanthe which you love, and which you came to hear one evening behind my shutter. But day after to-morrow you will come early; I shall expect you at night, at nine o'clock precisely. I forewarn you. Oh dear! how sad it is that the days are long! You understand;—when the clock strikes nine, I shall be in the garden."

"And I too."

And without saying it, moved by the same thought, drawn on by those electric currents which put two lovers in continual communication, both intoxicated with pleasure even in their grief, they fell into each other's arms, without perceiving that their lips were joined, while their uplifted eyes, overflowing with ecstasy and full of tears, were fixed upon the stars.

When Marius went out, the street was empty.

While Marius was thinking with his head against the tree, an idea had passed through his mind; an idea, alas! which he himself deemed senseless and impossible. He had formed a desperate resolution.

THE OLD HEART AND YOUNG HEART IN PRESENCE

Grandfather Gillenormand had, at this period, fully completed his ninety-first year. He still lived with Mademoiselle Gillenormand, Rue des Filles du Calvaire, No. 6, in that old house which belonged to him. He was, as we remember, one of those antique old men who await death still erect, whom age loads without making them stoop, and whom grief itself does not bend.

He had had hung in his room, at the foot of his bed, as the first thing which he wished to see on awaking, an old portrait of his other daughter, she who was dead, Madame Pontmercy, a portrait taken when she was eighteen years old. He looked at this portrait incessantly. He happened one day to say, while looking at it:

"I think it looks like the child."

"Like my sister?" replied Mademoiselle Gillenormand. "Why yes."

The old man added:

"And like him also."

Once, as he was sitting, his knees pressed together, and his eyes almost closed, in a posture of dejection, his daughter ventured to say to him:

"Father, are you still so angry with him?"

She stopped, not daring to go further.

"With whom?" asked he.

"With that poor Marius?"

He raised his old head, laid his thin and wrinkled fist upon the table, and cried in his most irritated and quivering tone:

"Poor Marius, you say? That gentleman is a rascal, a worthless knave, a little ungrateful vanity, with no heart, no soul, a proud, a wicked man!"

And he turned away that his daughter might not see the tear he had in his eyes.

Three days later, after a silence which had lasted for four hours, he said to his daughter snappishly:

"I have had the honour to beg Mademoiselle Gillenormand never to speak to me of him."

Aunt Gillenormand gave up all attempts and came to this profound diagnosis: "My father never loved my sister very much after her folly. It is clear that he detests Marius."

"After her folly" meant: after she married the colonel.

One evening, it was the 4th of June, which did not prevent Monsieur Gillenormand from having a blazing fire in his fireplace, he had said goodnight to his daughter who was sewing in the adjoining room. He was alone in his room with the rural scenery, his feet upon the andirons, half enveloped in his vast coromandel screen with nine folds, leaning upon his table on which two candles were burning under a green shade, buried in his tapestried armchair, a book in his hand, but not reading. He was dressed, according to his custom, *en incroyable,* and resembled an antique portrait of Garat. This would have caused him to be followed in the streets, but his daughter always covered him when he went out, with a huge bishop's doublet, which hid his dress. At home, except in getting up and going to bed, he never wore a dressing-gown. *"It gives an old look,"* said he.

Monsieur Gillenormand thought of Marius lovingly and bitterly; and, as usual, the bitterness predominated. An increase of tenderness always ended by boiling over and turning into indignation. He was at that point where we seek to adopt a course, and to accept what rends us. He was just explaining to himself that there was no longer any reason for Marius to return, that if he had been going to return, he would have done so already, that he must give him up. He endeavoured to bring himself to the idea that it was over with, and that he would die without seeing "that gentleman" again. But his whole nature revolted; his old paternity could not consent to it. "What?" said he, this was his sorrowful refrain, "he will not come back!" His bald head had fallen upon his breast, and he was vaguely fixing a lamentable and irritated look upon the embers on his hearth.

In the deepest of his reverie, his old domestic, Basque, came in and asked:

"Can monsieur receive Monsieur Marius?"

The old man straightened up, pallid and like a corpse which rises under a galvanic shock. All his blood had flown back to his heart. He faltered:

"Monsieur Marius what?"

"I don't know," answered Basque, intimidated and thrown out of countenance by his master's appearance, "I have not seen him. Nicolette just told me: There is a young man here, say that it is Monsieur Marius."

M. Gillenormand stammered out in a whisper:

"Show him in."

And he remained in the same attitude, his head shaking, his eyes fixed on the door. It opened. A young man entered. It was Marius.

Marius stopped at the door, as if waiting to be asked to come in.

His almost wretched dress was not perceived in the obscurity produced by the green shade. Only his face, calm and grave, but strangely sad, could be distinguished.

M. Gillenormand, as if congested with astonishment and joy, sat for some moments without seeing anything but a light, as when one is in presence of an apparition. He was almost fainting; he perceived Marius through a blinding haze. It was indeed he, it was indeed Marius!

At last! after four years! He seized him, so to speak, all over at a glance. He thought him beautiful, noble, striking, adult, a complete man, with graceful attitude and pleasing air. He would gladly have opened his arms, called him, rushed upon him, his heart melted in rapture, affectionate words welled and overflowed in his breast; indeed, all this tenderness started up and came to his lips, and, through the contrast which was the groundwork of his nature, there came forth a harsh word. He said abruptly:

"What is it you come here for?"

Marius answered with embarrassment:

"Monsieur"——

M. Gillenormand would have had Marius throw himself into his arms. He was displeased with Marius and with himself. He felt that he was rough, and that Marius was cold. It was to the goodman an insupportable and irritating anguish, to feel himself so tender and so much in tears within, while he could only be harsh without. The bitterness returned. He interrupted Marius with a sharp tone:

"Then what do you come for?"

This then signified: *If you don't come to embrace me.* Marius looked at his grandfather, whose pallor had changed to marble.

"Monsieur"——

The old man continued, in a stern voice:

"Do you come to ask my pardon? have you seen your fault?"

He thought to put Marius on the track, and that "the child" was going to bend. Marius shuddered; it was the disavowal of his father which was asked of him; he cast down his eyes and answered:

"No, monsieur."

"And then," exclaimed the old man impetuously, with a grief which was bitter and full of anger, "what do you want with me?"

Marius clasped his hands, took a step, and said in a feeble and trembling voice:

"Monsieur, have pity on me."

This word moved M. Gillenormand; spoken sooner, it would have softened him, but it came too late. The grandfather arose; he supported himself upon his cane with both hands, his lips were white, his forehead quivered, but his tall stature commanded the stooping Marius.

"Pity on you, monsieur! The youth asks pity from the old man of ninety-one! You are entering life, I am leaving it; you go to the theatre, the ball, the café, the billiard-room; you have wit, you please the women, you are a handsome fellow, while I cannot leave my chimney corner in midsummer; you are rich, with the only riches there are, while I have all the poverties of old age; infirmity, isolation! You have your thirty-two teeth, a good stomach, a keen eye, strength, appetite, health, cheerfulness, a forest of black hair, while I have not even white hair left; I have lost my teeth, I am losing my legs, I am losing my memory, there are three names of streets which I am always confounding, the Rue Charlot, the Rue du Chaume, and the Rue Saint Claude, there is where I am; you have the whole future before you full of sunshine, while I am beginning not to see another drop of it, so deep am I getting into the night; you are in love, of course, I am not loved by anybody in the world; and you ask pity of me. Zounds, Molière forgot this. If that is the way you jest at the Palais, Messieurs Lawyers, I offer you my sincere compliments. You are funny fellows."

And the octogenarian resumed in an angry and stern voice:

"Come now, what do you want of me?"

"Monsieur," said Marius, "I know that my presence is displeasing to you, but I come only to ask one thing of you, and then I will go away immediately."

"You are a fool!" said the old man. "Who tells you to go away?"

This was the translation of those loving words which he had deep in his heart: *Come, ask my pardon now! Throw yourself on my neck!* M. Gillenormand felt that Marius was going to leave him in a few moments, that his unkind reception repelled him, that his harshness was driving him away; he said all this to himself, and his anguish increased; and as his anguish immediately turned into anger, his harshness augmented. He would have had Marius comprehend, and Marius did not comprehend; which rendered the goodman furious. He continued:

"What! you have left me! me, your grandfather, you have left my house to go nobody knows where; you have afflicted your aunt, you have been, that is clear, it is more pleasant, leading the life of a bachelor, playing the elegant, going home at all hours, amusing yourself; you have not given me a sign of life; you have contracted debts without even telling me to pay them; you have made yourself a breaker of windows and a rioter, and, at the end of four years, you come to my house, and have nothing to say but that!"

This violent method of pushing the grandson to tenderness produced only silence on the part of Marius. M. Gillenormand folded his arms, a posture which with him was particularly imperious, and apostrophised Marius bitterly.

"Let us make an end of it. You have come to ask something of me, say you? Well what? what is it? speak!"

"Monsieur," said Marius, with the look of a man who feels that he is about to fall into an abyss, "I come to ask your permission to marry."

M. Gillenormand rang. Basque, the valet, half opened the door.

"Send my daughter in."

A second later—the door opened again. Mademoiselle Gillenormand did not come in, but showed herself. Marius was standing, mute, his arms hanging down, with the look of a criminal. M. Gillenormand was coming and going up and down the room. He turned towards his daughter and said to her:

"Nothing. It is Monsieur Marius. Bid him good evening. Monsieur wishes to marry. That is all. Go."

The crisp, harsh tones of the old man's voice announced a strange fulness of feeling. The aunt looked at Marius with a bewildered air, appeared hardly to recognise him, allowed neither a motion nor a syllable to escape her, and disappeared at a breath from her father, quicker than a dry leaf before a hurricane.

Meanwhile Grandfather Gillenormand had returned and stood with his back to the fireplace.

"You marry! at twenty-one! You have arranged that! You have nothing but a permission to ask! a formality. Sit down, monsieur. Well, you have had a revolution since I had the honour to see you. The Jacobins have had the upper hand. You ought to be satisfied. You are a republican, are you not, since you are a baron? You arrange that. The republic is sauce to the barony. Are you decorated by July?—did you take a bit of the Louvre, monsieur? There is close by here, in the Rue Saint Antoine, opposite the Rue des Nonaindières, a ball incrusted in the wall of the third story of a house with this inscription: July 28th, 1830. Go and see that. That produces a good effect. Ah! Pretty things those friends of yours do. By the way, are they not making a fountain in the square of the monument of M. the Duke de Berry? So you want to marry? Whom? can the question be asked without indiscretion?"

He stopped, and, before Marius had had time to answer, he added violently:

"Come now, you have a business? your fortune made? how much do you earn at your lawyer's trade?"

"Nothing," said Marius, with a firmness and resolution which were almost savage.

"Nothing? you have nothing to live on but the twelve hundred livres which I send you?"

Marius made no answer. M. Gillenormand continued:

"Then I understand the girl is rich?"

"As I am."

"What! no dowry?"

"No."

"Some expectations?"

"I believe not."

"With nothing to her back! and what is the father?"

"I do not know."

"What is her name?"

"Mademoiselle Fauchelevent."

"Fauchewhat?"

"Fauchelevent."

"Pttt!" said the old man.

"Monsieur!" exclaimed Marius.

M. Gillenormand interrupted him with the tone of a man who is talking to himself.

"That is it, twenty-one, no business, twelve hundred livres a year, Madame the Baroness Pontmercy will go to market to buy two sous' worth of parsley."

"Monsieur," said Marius, in the desperation of the last vanishing hope, "I supplicate you! I conjure you, in the name of heaven, with clasped hands, monsieur, I throw myself at your feet, allow me to marry her!"

The old man burst into a shrill, dreary laugh, through which he coughed and spoke.

"Ha, ha, ha! you said to yourself, 'The devil! I will go and find that old wig, that silly dolt! What a pity that I am not twenty-five! how I would toss him a good respectful notice! how I would give him the go-by. Never mind, I will say to him: Old idiot, you are too happy to see me, I desire to marry, I desire to espouse mamselle no matter whom, daughter of monsieur no matter what, I have no shoes, she has no chemise, all right; I desire to throw to the dogs my career, my future, my youth, my life; I desire to make a plunge into misery with a wife at my neck, that is my idea, you must consent to it! and the old fossil will consent.' Go, my boy, as you like, tie your stone to yourself, espouse your Pousselevent, your Couplevent—Never, monsieur! never!"

"Father!"

"Never!"

At the tone in which this "never" was pronounced Marius lost all hope.

He rose, picked up his hat which was on the floor, and walked towards the door with a firm and assured step. There he turned, bowed profoundly before his grandfather, raised his head again, and said:

"Five years ago you outraged my father; to-day you have outraged my wife. I ask nothing more of you, monsieur. Adieu."

Grandfather Gillenormand, astounded, opened his mouth, stretched out his arms, attempted to rise, but before he could utter a word, the door was closed and Marius had disappeared.

The old man was for a few moments motionless, and as it were thunder-stricken, unable to speak or breathe, as if a hand were clutching his throat. At last he tore himself from his chair, ran to the door as fast as a man who is ninety-one can run, opened it and cried:

"Help! help!"

His daughter appeared, then the servants. He continued with a pitiful rattle in his voice:

"Run after him; catch him! what have I done to him! he is mad! he is going away! Oh! my God! oh! my God!—this time he will not come back!"

He went to the window which looked upon the street, opened it with his tremulous old hands, hung more than half his body outside, while Basque and Nicolette held him from behind, and cried:

"Marius! Marius! Marius! Marius!"

But Marius was already out of hearing, and was at that very moment turning the corner of the Rue Saint Louis.

The octogenarian carried his hands to his temples two or three times, with an expression of anguish, drew back tottering, and sank into an armchair, pulseless, voiceless, tearless, shaking his head, and moving his lips with a stupid air, having now nothing in his eyes or in his heart but something deep and mournful, which resembled night.

BOOK VI—WHERE ARE THEY GOING?

JEAN VALJEAN

THAT very day, towards four o'clock in the afternoon, Jean Valjean was sitting alone upon the reverse of one of the most solitary embankments of the Champ de Mars. Whether from prudence, or from desire for meditation, or simply as a result of one of those insensible changes of habits which creep little by little into all lives, he now rarely went out with Cosette. He wore his working-man's waistcoat, brown linen trousers, and his cap with the long visor hid his face. He was now calm and happy in regard to Cosette; what had for some time alarmed and disturbed him was dissipated; but within a week or two anxieties of a different nature had come upon him. One day, when walking on the boulevard, he had seen Thénardier who was known to have escaped from prison with several of his evil followers; thanks to his disguise, Thénardier had not recognised him; but since then Jean Valjean had seen him again several times, and he was now certain that Thénardier was prowling about the quartier. This was sufficient to make him take a serious step. Thénardier there! he and his companions at large! this was all dangers at once. Moreover, Paris was not quiet: the political troubles had this inconvenience for him who had any thing in his life to conceal, that the police had become very active, and very secret, and that in seeking to track out a man like Pépin or Morey, they would be very likely to discover a man like Jean Valjean. Jean Valjean had decided to leave Paris, and even France, and to pass over to England. He had told Cosette. In less than a week he wished to be gone. He was sitting on the embankment in the Champ de Mars, revolving all manner of thoughts in his mind, Thénardier, the police, the journey, and the difficulty of procuring a passport.

On all these points he was anxious.

Finally, an inexplicable circumstance which had just burst upon him, and with which he was still warm, had added to his alarm. On the morning of that very day, being the only one up in the house, and walking in the garden before Cosette's shutters were open, he had suddenly come upon this line scratched upon the wall, probably with a nail.

16, *Rue de la Verrerie.*

It was quite recent, the lines were white in the old black mortar, a tuft of nettles at the foot of the wall was powdered with fresh fine plaster. It had probably been written during the night. What was it? an address? a signal for others? a warning for him? At all events, it was evident that the garden had been violated, and that some persons unknown had penetrated into it. He recalled the strange incidents which had already alarmed the house. His mind worked upon this canvass. He took good care not to speak to Cosette of the line written on the wall, for fear of frightening her.

In the midst of these meditations, he perceived, by a shadow which the sun projected, that somebody had just stopped upon the crest of the embankment immediately behind him. He was about to turn round, when a folded paper fell upon his knees, as if a hand had dropped it from above his head. He took the paper, unfolded it, and read on it this word, written in large letters with a pencil:

REMOVE.

Jean Valjean rose hastily, there was no longer anybody on the embankment; he looked about him, and perceived a species of being larger than a child, smaller than a man, dressed in a grey blouse, and trousers of dirt-coloured cotton velvet, which jumped over the parapet and let itself slide into the ditch of the Champ de Mars.

Jean Valjean returned home immediately, full of thought.

MARIUS

MARIUS had left M. Gillenormand's desolate. He had entered with a very small hope; he came out with an immense despair.

He began to walk the streets, the resource of those who suffer. He thought of nothing which he could ever remember. At two o'clock in the morning he returned to Courfeyrac's, and threw himself, dressed as he was, upon his mattress. It was broad sunlight when he fell asleep, with that frightful, heavy slumber in which the ideas come and go in the brain. When he awoke, he saw standing in the room, their hats upon their heads, all ready to go out, and very busy, Courfeyrac, Enjolras, Feuilly, and Combeferre.

Courfeyrac said to him:

"Are you going to the funeral of General Lamarque?"

It seemed to him that Courfeyrac was speaking Chinese.

He went out some time after them. He put into his pocket the pistols which Javert had confided to him at the time of the adventure of the 3rd of February, and which had remained in his hands. These pistols were still loaded. It would be difficult to say what obscure thought he had in his mind in taking them with him.

He rambled about all day without knowing where; it rained at intervals, he did not perceive it; for his dinner he bought a penny roll at a baker's, put it in his pocket, and forgot it. It would appear that he took a bath in the Seine without being conscious of it. There are moments when a man has a furnace in his brain. Marius was in one of those moments. He hoped nothing more, he feared nothing more; he had reached this condition since the evening before. He waited for night with feverish impatience, he had but one clear idea; that was, that at nine o'clock he should see Cosette. This last happiness was now his whole future; afterwards, darkness. At intervals, while walking along the most deserted boulevards, he seemed to hear strange sounds in Paris. He roused himself from his reverie, and said: "Are they fighting?"

At nightfall, at precisely nine o'clock, as he had promised Cosette, he was in the Rue Plumet. When he approached the grating he forgot everything else. It was forty-eight hours since he had seen Cosette, he was going to see her again, every other thought faded away, and he felt now only a deep and wonderful joy. Those minutes in which we live centuries always have this sovereign and wonderful peculiarity, that for the moment while they are passing, they entirely fill the heart.

Marius displaced the grating, and sprang into the garden. Cosette was not at the place where she usually waited for him. He crossed the thicket and went to the recess near the steps. "She is waiting for me there," said he. Cosette was not there. He raised his eyes, and saw that the shutters of the house were closed. He took a turn around the garden, the garden was deserted. Then he returned to the house, and, mad with love, intoxicated, dismayed, exasperated with grief and anxiety, like a master who returns home in an untoward hour, he rapped on the shutters. He rapped, he rapped again, at the risk of seeing the window open and the forbidding face of the father appear and ask him: "What do you want?" This was nothing compared with what he now began to see. When he had rapped, he raised his voice and called Cosette. "Cosette!" cried he. "Cosette!" repeated he imperiously. There was no answer. It was settled. Nobody in the garden; nobody in the house.

Marius fixed his despairing eyes upon that dismal house, as black, as silent, and more empty than a tomb. He looked at the stone seat where he had passed so many adorable hours with Cosette. Then he sat down upon the steps, his heart full of tenderness and resolution, he blessed his love in the depths of his thought, and he said to himself that since Cosette was gone, there was nothing more for him but to die.

Suddenly he heard a voice which appeared to come from the street, and which cried through the trees:

"Monsieur Marius!"

He arose.

"Hey?" said he.

"Monsieur Marius, is it you?"

"Yes."

"Monsieur Marius," added the voice, "your friends are expecting you at the barricade, in the Rue de la Chanvrerie."

This voice was not entirely unknown to him. It resembled the harsh and roughened voice of Eponine. Marius ran to the grating, pushed aside the movable bar, passed his head through, and saw somebody who appeared to him to be a young man rapidly disappearing in the twilight.

M. MABEUF

Jean Valjean's purse was useless to M. Mabeuf. M. Mabeuf, in his venerable childlike austerity, had not accepted the gift of the stars; he did not admit that a star could coin itself into gold louis. He did not guess that what fell from the sky came from Gavroche. He carried the purse to the Commissary of Police of the quartier, as a lost article, placed by the finder at the disposition of claimants. The purse was lost, in fact. We need not say that nobody reclaimed it, and it did not help M. Mabeuf.

For the rest, M. Mabeuf had continued to descend.

The year before, he owed his housekeeper her wages; now he owed three quarters of his rent. Before this, and for a long time before, he had given up the two eggs and the bit of beef which he used to eat from time to time. He dined on bread and potatoes. He had sold his last furniture, then all his spare bedding and clothing, then his collections of plants and his pictures; but he still had his most precious books, several of which were of great rarity.

One day Mother Plutarch said to him:

"I have nothing to buy the dinner with."

What she called the dinner was a loaf of bread and four or five potatoes.

"On credit?" said M. Mabeuf.

"You know well enough that they refuse me."

M. Mabeuf opened his library, looked long at all his books one after another, as a father, compelled to decimate his children, would look at them before choosing, then took one of them hastily, put it under his arm, and went out. He returned two hours afterwards with nothing under his arm, laid thirty sous on the table, and said:

"You will get some dinner."

From that moment, Mother Plutarch saw settling over the old man's white face a dark veil which was never lifted again.

The next day, the day after, every day, he had to begin again. M. Mabeuf went out with a book and came back with a piece of money. As the bookstall keepers saw that he was forced to sell, they bought from him for twenty sous what he had paid twenty francs for, sometimes to the same booksellers. Volume by volume, the whole library passed away. He said at times: "I am eighty years old however," as if he had some lingering hope of reaching the end of his days before reaching the end of his books. His sadness increased. Once, however, he had a pleasure. He went out with a Robert Estienne which he sold for thirty-five sous on the Quai Malaquais and returned with an Aldine which he had bought for forty sous in the Rue des

Grès. "I owe five sous," said he to Mother Plutarch, glowing with joy.

That day he did not dine.

He had acquired the habit, every evening before going to bed, of reading a few pages in his Diogenes Laertius. He knew Greek well enough to enjoy the peculiarities of the text which he possessed. He had now no other joy. Some weeks rolled by. Suddenly Mother Plutarch fell sick. There is one thing sadder than having nothing with which to buy bread from the baker; that is, having nothing with which to buy drugs from the apothecary. One night, the doctor had ordered a very dear potion. And then, the sickness was growing worse, a nurse was needed. M. Mabeuf opened his bookcase; there was nothing more there. The last volume had gone. The Diogenes Laertius alone remained.

He put the unique copy under his arm and went out, it was the 4th of June, 1832; he went to the Porte Saint Jacques, to Royol's Successor's, and returned with a hundred francs. He laid the pile of five-franc pieces on the old servant's bedroom table, and went back to his room without saying a word.

The next day, by dawn, he was seated on the stone post in the garden, and he might have been seen from over the hedge all the morning motionless, his head bowed down, his eyes vaguely fixed upon the withered beds. At intervals he wept; the old man did not seem to perceive it. In the afternoon, extraordinary sounds broke out in Paris. They resembled musket shots, and the clamour of a multitude.

Father Mabeuf raised his head. He saw a gardener going by, and asked:

"What is that?"

The gardener answered, his spade upon his shoulder, and in the most quiet tone:

"It's the émeutes."

"What émeutes?"

"Yes. They are fighting."

"What are they fighting for?"

"Oh! Lordy!" said the gardener.

"Whereabouts?" continued M. Mabeuf.

"Near the Arsenal."

Father Mabeuf went into the house, took his hat, looked mechanically for a book to put under his arm did not find any, said: "Ah! it is true!" and went away with a bewildered air.

BOOK VII—JUNE 5TH, 1832

A BURIAL: OPPORTUNITY FOR RE-BIRTH

The events which we are about to relate belong to that dramatic and living reality which the historian sometimes neglects, for lack of time and space. In them, however, we insist, in them is the life, the palpitation, the quivering of humanity. Little incidents, are, so to speak, the foliage of great events and are lost in the distance of history. The epoch known as that *of émeutes* abounds in details of this kind. The judicial investigations, for other reasons than history, did not reveal everything, nor perhaps get to the bottom of everything. We shall therefore bring to light, among the known and public circumstances, some things which have never been known, deeds, over some of which oblivion has passed; over others, death. Most of the actors in those gigantic scenes have disappeared; from the morrow they were silent; but what we shall relate, we can say that we saw. We shall change some names, for history relates and does not inform against, but we shall paint reality. From the nature of the book which we are writing, we only show one side and an episode, and that certainly the least known, of the days of the 5th and 6th of June, 1832; but we shall do it in such a way that the reader may catch a glimpse, under the gloomy veil which we are about to lift, of the real countenance of that fearful public tragedy.

In the spring of 1832, although for three months the cholera had chilled all hearts and thrown over their agitation an inexpressibly mournful calm, Paris had for a long time been ready for a commotion. The great city resembles a piece of artillery; when it is loaded the falling of a spark is enough, the shot goes off. In June, 1832, the spark was the death of General Lamarque.

Lamarque was a man of renown and of action. He had had successively, under the Empire and under the Restoration, the two braveries necessary to the two epochs, the bravery of the battlefield and the bravery of the rostrum. He was eloquent as he had been valiant; men felt a sword in his speech. Like Foy, his predecessor, after having upheld command, he upheld liberty. He sat between the left and the extreme left, loved by the people because he accepted the chances of the future, loved by the masses because he had served the emperor well. He was, with Counts Gérard and Drouet, one of Napoleon's marshals *in petto.* The treaties of 1815 regarded him as a personal offence. He hated Wellington with a direct hatred which pleased the multitude; and for seventeen years, hardly noticing intermediate events, he had majestically preserved the sadness of Waterloo. In his death-agony, at his latest hour, he had pressed against his breast a sword which was presented to him by the officers of the Hundred Days. Napoleon died pronouncing the word *armée,* Lamarque pronouncing the word *patrie.*

His death, which had been looked for, was dreaded by the people as a loss, and by the government as an opportunity. This death was a mourning. Like everything which is bitter, mourning may turn into revolt. This is what happened.

The eve and the morning of the 5th of June, the day fixed for the funeral of Lamarque, the Faubourg Saint Antoine, through the edge of which the procession was to pass, assumed a formidable aspect. That tumultuous network of streets was full of rumour. Men armed themselves as they could. Some joiners carried their bench-claw "to stave in the doors." One of them had made a dagger of a shoe-hook by breaking off the hook and sharpening the stump. Another, in the fever "to attack," had slept for three nights without undressing. A carpenter named Lombier met a comrade, who asked him: "Where are you going?" "Well! I have no arms." "What then?" "I am going to my yard to look for my compasses." "What for?" "I don't know," said Lombier. A certain Jacqueline, a man of business, hailed every working-man who passed by with: "Come, you!" He bought ten sous' worth of wine, and said: "Have you any work?" "No." "Go to Filspierre's, between the Barrière Montreuil and the Barrière Charonne, you will find work." They found at Filspierre's cartridges and arms. Certain known chiefs *did the post;* that is to say, ran from one house to another to assemble their people. At Barthélemy's, near the Barrière du Trone, and at Capet's, at the Petit Chapeau, the drinkers accosted each other seriously. They were heard to say: *"Where is your pistol?" "Under my blouse." "And yours?" "Under my shirt."* On the Rue Traversière, in front of the Roland workshop, and in the Cour de la Maison Brûlée, in front of Bernier's machine-shop, groups were whispering. Among the most ardent, a certain Mavot was noticed, who never worked more than a week in one shop, the masters sending him away, "because they had to dispute with him every day." Mavot was killed the next day in the barricade, in the Rue Ménilmontant. Pretot, who was also to die in the conflict, seconded Mavot, and to this question: "What is your object?" answered: *"Insurrection."* Some working-men, gathered at the corner of the Rue de Bercy, were waiting for a man named Lemarin, revolutionary officer for the Faubourg Saint Marceau. Orders were passed about almost publicly.

On the 5th of June, then, a day of mingled rain and sunshine, the procession of General Lamarque passed through Paris with the official military pomp, somewhat increased by way of precaution. Two battalions, drums muffled, muskets reversed, ten thousand National Guards, their sabres at their sides, the batteries of artillery of the National Guard, escorted the coffin. The hearse was drawn by young men. The officers of the Invalides followed immediately bearing branches of laurel. Then came a countless multitude, strange and agitated, the sectionaries of the Friends of the People, the Law School, the Medical School, refugees from all nations, Spanish, Italian, German, Polish flags, horizontal tri-coloured flags, every possible banner, children waving green branches, stone-cutters and carpenters, who were on a strike at that very moment, printers recognisable by their paper caps, walking two by two, three by three, uttering cries, almost all brandishing clubs, a few swords, without order, and yet with a single soul, now a rout, now a column. Some platoons chose chiefs; a man, armed with a pair of pistols openly worn, seemed to be passing others in review as they filed off before him. On the cross alleys of the boulevards, in the branches of the trees, on the balconies, at the windows, on the roofs, were swarms of heads, men, women, children; their eyes were full of anxiety. An armed multitude was passing by, a terrified multitude was looking on.

The government also was observing. It was observing, with its hand upon the hilt of the sword. One might have seen, all ready to march, with full cartridge-boxes, guns and musquetoons loaded, in the Place Louis XV., four squadrons of carbineers, in the saddle, trumpets at their heads, in the Latin Quarter and at the Jardin des Plantes, the Municipal Guard, en échelon from street to street, at the Halle aux Vins a squadron of dragoons, at La Grève one half of the 12th Light, the other half at the Bastille, the 6th dragoons at the Célestins, the Court of the Louvre full of artillery. The rest of the troops were stationed in the barracks, without counting the regiments in the environs of Paris. Anxious authority held suspended over the threatening multitude twenty-four thousand soldiers in the city, and thirty thousand in the banlieue.

The cortège made its way, with a feverish slowness, from the house of death, along the boulevards as far as the Bastille. It rained from time to time; the rain had no effect upon that throng. Several incidents, the coffin drawn around the Vendôme column, the stones thrown at the Duke de Fitz-James who was seen on a balcony with his hat on, the Gallic cock torn from a popular flag and dragged in the mud, a sergeant de ville wounded by a sword thrust at the Porte Saint Martin, an officer of the 12th Light saying aloud: "I am a republican," the Polytechnic School unlooked for after its forced countersign, the cries: *Vive l'école polytechnique! Vive la république!* marked the progress of the procession. At the Bastille, long and formidable files of the curious from the Faubourg Saint Antoine made their junction with the cortège, and a certain terrible ebullition began to upheave the multitude.

One man was heard saying to another: "Do you see that man with the red beard? it is he who will say when we must draw." It would appear that that same red beard was found afterwards with the same office in another émeute; the Quénisset affair.

The hearse passed the Bastille, followed the canal, crossed the little bridge, and reached the esplanade of the Bridge of Austerlitz. There it stopped. At this moment a bird's-eye view of this multitude would have presented the appearance of a comet, the head of which was at the esplanade, while the tail, spreading over the Quai Bourdon, covered the Bastille, and stretched along the boulevard as far as the Porte Saint Martin. A circle was formed about the hearse. The vast assemblage became silent. Lafayette spoke and bade farewell to Lamarque. It was a touching and august moment, all heads were uncovered, all hearts throbbed. Suddenly a man on horseback, dressed in black, appeared in the midst of the throng with a red flag, others say with a pike surmounted by a red cap. Lafayette turned away his head. Exelmans left the cortège.

This red flag raised a storm and disappeared in it. From the Boulevard Bourdon to the Bridge of Austerlitz one of those shouts which resemble billows moved the multitude. Two prodigious shouts arose: *Lamarque to the Pantheon! Lafayette to the Hôtel de Ville!* Some young men, amid the cheers of the throng, harnessed themselves, and began to draw Lamarque in the hearse over the bridge of Austerlitz, and Lafayette in a fiacre along the Quai Morland.

In the crowd which surrounded and cheered Lafayette, was noticed and pointed out a German, named Ludwig Snyder, who afterwards died a centenarian, who had also been in the war of 1776, and who had fought at Trenton under Washington, and under Lafayette at Brandywine.

Meanwhile, on the left bank, the municipal cavalry was in motion, and had just barred the bridge, on the right bank the dragoons left the Célestins and deployed along the Quai Morland. The men who were drawing Lafayette suddenly perceived them at the corner of the Quai, and cried: "the dragoons!" The dragoons were advancing at a walk, in silence, their pistols in their holsters, their sabres in their sheaths, their musketoons in their rests, with an air of gloomy expectation.

At two hundred paces from the little bridge, they halted. The fiacre in which Lafayette was, made its way up to them, they opened their ranks, let it pass, and closed again behind it. At that moment the dragoons and the multitude came together. The women fled in terror.

What took place in that fatal moment? nobody could tell. It was the dark moment when two clouds mingle. Some say that a trumpet-flourish sounding the charge was heard from the direction of the

Arsenal, others that a dagger-thrust was given by a child to a dragoon. The fact is that three shots were suddenly fired, the first killed the chief of the squadron, Cholet, the second killed an old deaf woman who was closing her window in the Rue Contrescarpe, the third singed the epaulet of an officer; a woman cried: "They are beginning too soon!" and all at once there was seen, from the side opposite the Quai Morland, a squadron of dragoons which had remained in barracks turning out on the gallop, with swords drawn, from the Rue Bassompierre and the Boulevard Bourdon, and sweeping all before them.

There are no more words, the tempest breaks loose, stones fall like hail, musketry bursts forth, many rush headlong down the bank and cross the little arm of the Seine now filled up, the yards of the Ile Louviers, that vast ready-made citadel, bristle with combatants, they tear up stakes, they fire pistol-shots, a barricade is planned out, the young men crowded back, pass the Bridge of Austerlitz with the hearse at a run, and charge on the Municipal Guard, the carbineers rush up, the dragoons ply the sabre, the mass scatters in every direction, a rumour of war flies to the four corners of Paris, men cry: "To arms!" they run, they tumble, they fly, they resist. Wrath sweeps along the émeute as the wind sweeps along a fire.

BOOK VIII—THE ATOM FRATERNISES WITH THE HURRICANE

SOME INSIGHT INTO THE ORIGIN OF GAVROCHE'S POETRY—INFLUENCE OF AN ACADEMICIAN UPON THAT POETRY

At the moment the insurrection, springing up at the shock of the people with the troops in front of the Arsenal, determined a backward movement in the multitude which was following the hearse and which, for the whole length of the boulevards, weighed, so to say, upon the head of the procession, there was a frightful reflux. The mass wavered, the ranks broke, all ran, darted, slipped away, some with cries of attack, others with the pallor of flight. The great river which covered the boulevards divided in a twinkling, overflowed on the right and on the left, and poured in torrents into two hundred streets at once with the rushing of an opened mill-sluice. At this moment a ragged child who was coming down the Rue Ménilmontant, holding in his hand a branch of laburnum in bloom, which he had just gathered on the heights of Belleville, caught sight, before a second-hand dealer's shop, of an old horse pistol. He threw his flowering branch upon the pavement, and cried:

"Mother What's-your-name, I'll borrow your machine."

And he ran off with the pistol.

It was little Gavroche going to war.

On the boulevard he perceived that the pistol had no hammer.

Soon he had reached, pistol in hand, the Rue du Pont aux Choux. He noticed that there was now, in that street, but one shop open, and, a matter worthy of reflection, a pastry-cook's shop. This was a providential opportunity to eat one more apple-puff before entering the unknown. Gavroche stopped, fumbled in his trousers, felt in his fob, turned out his pockets, found nothing in them, not a sou, and began to cry: "Help!"

It is hard to lack the final cake.

Gavroche none the less continued on his way.

Two minutes later, he was in the Rue Saint Louis. While passing through the Rue du Parc Royal he felt the need of some compensation for the impossible apple-puff, and he gave himself the immense pleasure of tearing down the theatre posters in broad day.

A little further along, seeing a group of well-to-do persons pass by, who appeared to him to be men of property, he shrugged his shoulders, and spit out at random this mouthful of philosophic bile:

"These rich men, how fat they are! they stuff themselves. They wallow in good dinners. Ask them what they do with their money. They don't know anything about it. They eat it, they do! How much of it the belly carries away."

GAVROCHE ON THE MARCH

The brandishing of a pistol without a hammer, holding it in one's hand in the open street, is such a public function that Gavroche felt his spirits rise higher with every step. He cried, between the snatches of the Marseillaise which he was singing:

"It's all going well. I suffer a good deal in my left paw, I am broken with my rheumatism, but I am content, citizens. The bourgeois have nothing to do but to behave themselves, I am going to sneeze subversive couplets at them. What are the detectives? they are dogs. By jinks! don't let us fail in respect for dogs. Now I wish I had one to my pistol.[1] I come from the boulevard, my friends, it is getting hot, it is boiling over a little, it is simmering. It is time to skim the pot. Forward, men! let their impure blood water the furrows! I give my days for my country. I have had enough of despotism."

At that moment, the horse of a lancer of the National Guard, who was passing, having fallen down, Gavroche laid his pistol on the pavement, and raised up the man, then he helped to raise the horse. After which he picked up his pistol, and resumed his way.

In the Rue de Thorigny, all was peace and silence. This apathy, suited to the Marais, contrasted with the vast surrounding uproar. Four gossips were chatting upon a doorstep.

Soon after, Gavroche passed the Hôtel Lamoignon. There he shouted out this appeal:

"En route for battle!"

And he was seized with a fit of melancholy. He looked at his pistol with a reproachful air, which seemed an endeavour to soften it:

"I go off," said he to it, "but you do not go off."

One dog may distract attention from another. A very lean cur was passing. Gavroche was moved to pity.

"My poor bow-wow," said he, "have you swallowed a barrel, then, that all the hoops show?"

Then he bent his steps towards the Orme Saint Gervais.

JUST INDIGNATION OF A BARBER

A WORTHY barber, was at this moment in his shop, busy shaving an old legionary soldier who had served under the empire. They were chatting. The barber had naturally spoken to the veteran of the émeute, then of General Lamarque, and from Lamarque they had come to the emperor. Hence a conversation between a barber and a soldier, which Prudhomme, if he had been present, would have enriched with arabesques, and which he would have entitled: *Dialogue of the razor and the sabre.*

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[1] The French call the hammer of a pistol, the *dog* of it.

"Monsieur," said the wig-maker, "how did the emperor mount on horseback?"

"Badly. He didn't know how to fall. So he never fell."

"Did he have fine horses? he must have had fine horses!"

"The day he gave me the cross, I noticed his animal. She was a running mare, perfectly white. Her ears were very wide apart, saddle deep, head fine, marked with a black star, neck very long, knees strongly jointed, ribs protruding, shoulders sloping, hind quarters powerful. A little more than fifteen hands high."

"A pretty horse," said the barber.

"It was the animal of his majesty."

The barber felt that after this word a little silence was proper, he conformed to it, then resumed:

"The emperor was never wounded but once, was he, monsieur?"

The old soldier answered with the calm and sovereign tone of a man who was there:

"In the heel. At Ratisbon. I never saw him so well dressed as he was that day. He was as neat as a penny."

"And you, Monsieur Veteran, you must have been wounded often?"

"I?" said the soldier, "ah! no great thing. I got two sabre slashes in my neck at Marengo, a ball in my right arm at Austerlitz, another in my left hip at Jena, at Friedland a bayonet thrust—there,—at Moscow seven or eight lance thrusts, no matter where, at Lutzen a shell burst which crushed my finger—Ah! and then at Waterloo a bullet in my leg. That is all."

"How beautiful it is," exclaimed the barber with a pindaric accent, "to die on the field of battle! Upon my word, rather than die in my bed, of sickness, slowly, a little every day, with drugs, plasters, syringes, and medicine, I would prefer a cannon ball in my belly."

"You are not fastidious," said the soldier.

He had hardly finished when a frightful crash shook the shop. A pane of the window had been suddenly shattered.

The barber became pallid.

"O God!" cried he, "there is one!"

"What?"

"A cannon ball."

"Here it is," said the soldier.

And he picked up something which was rolling on the floor. It was a stone.

The barber ran to the broken window and saw Gavroche, who was running with all his might towards the Saint Jean market. On passing the barber's shop, Gavroche, could not resist the desire to bid him good day, and had sent a stone through his sash.

"See!" screamed the barber, who from white had become blue, "he makes mischief for the sake of mischief. What has anybody done to that *gamin?*"

THE CHILD WONDERS AT THE OLD MAN

MEANWHILE Gavroche at the Saint Jean market, where the guard was already disarmed, had just—effected his junction—with a band led by Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Combeferre, and Feuilly. They were almost armed. Bahorel and Jean Prouvaire had joined them and enlarged the group. Enjolras had a double-barrelled fowling piece. Combeferre a National Guard's musket bearing the number of the legion, and at his waist two pistols which could be seen, his coat being unbuttoned, Jean Prouvaire an old cavalry musketoon, Bahorel a carbine; Courfeyrac was brandishing an unsheathed sword-cane. Feuilly, a drawn sabre in his hand, marched in the van, crying: "Poland for ever!"

They came from the Quai Morland cravatless, hatless, breathless, soaked by the rain, lightning in their eyes. Gavroche approached them calmly:

"Where are we going?"

"Come on," said Courfeyrac.

Behind Feuilly marched, or rather bounded, Bahorel, a fish in the water of the émeute. He had a crimson waistcoat, and those words which crush everything. His waistcoat overcame a passer, who cried out in desperation:

"There are the reds!"

"The red, the reds!" replied Bahorel. "A comical fear, bourgeois. As for me, I don't tremble before a red poppy, the little red hood inspires me with no dismay. Bourgeois, believe me, leave the fear of red to horned cattle."

A tumultuous cortège accompanied them, students, artists, young men affiliated to the Cougourde d'Aix, workingmen, rivermen, armed with clubs and bayonets; a few, like Combeferre, with pistols thrust into their waistbands. An old man, who appeared very old, was marching with this band. He was not armed, and he was hurrying, that he should not be left behind, although he had a thoughtful expression. Gavroche perceived him:

"Whossat?" said he to Courfeyrac.

"That is an old man."

It was M. Mabeuf.

THE OLD MAN

We must tell what had happened.

Enjolras and his friends were on the Boulevard Bourdon, near the warehouses, at the moment the dragoons charged. Enjolras, Courfeyrac, and Combeferre were among those who took to the Rue Bassomipierre, crying: "To the barricades!" In the Rue Lesdiguières they met an old man trudging along. What attracted their attention was, that this goodman was walking zigzag, as if he were drunk. Moreover, he had his hat in his hand, although it had been raining all the morning, and was raining hard at that very moment. Courfeyrac recognised Father Mabeuf. He knew from having seen him many times accompanying Marius to his door. Knowing the peaceful and more than timid habits of the old church-warden-bookworm, and astounded at seeing him in the midst of this tumult, within two steps of the cavalry charges, almost in the midst of a fusilade, bareheaded in the rain, and walking among the bullets, he went up to him, and the émeuter of five-and-twenty and the octogenarian exchanged this dialogue:

"Monsieur Mabeuf, go home."

"What for?"

"There is going to be a row."

"Very well."

"Sabre strokes, musket shots, Monsieur Mabeuf."

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THE BAND INCREASED AT EVERY MOMENT

"Very well."

"Cannon shots."

"Very well. Where are you going, you boys?"

"We are going to pitch the government over."

"Very well."

And he followed them. From that moment he had not uttered a word. His step had suddenly become firm; some workingmen had offered him an arm, he refused with a shake of the head. He advanced almost to the front rank of the column, having at once the motion of a man who is walking, and the countenance of a man who is asleep.

"What a desperate goodman!" murmured the students. The rumour ran through the assemblage that he was—an ancient Conventionist—an old regicide. The company had turned into the Rue de la Verrerie.

RECRUITS

The band increased at every moment. Towards the Rue des Billettes a man of tall stature, who was turning grey, whose rough and bold mien Courfeyrac, Enjolras, and Combeferre noticed, but whom none of them knew, joined them. Gavroche, busy singing, whistling, humming, going forward and rapping on the shutters of the shops with the butt of his hammerless pistol, paid no attention to this man.

It happened that, in the Rue de la Verrerie, they passed by Courfeyrac's door.

"That is lucky," said Courfeyrac, "I have forgotten my purse, and I have lost my hat." He left the company and went up to his room, four stairs at a time. He took an old hat and his purse. He took also a large square box, of the size of a big valise, which was hidden among his dirty clothes. As he was running down again, the portress hailed him:

"Portress, what is your name?" responded Courfeyrac.

The portress stood aghast.

"Why, you know it very well; I am the portress, my name is Mother Veuvain."

"Well, if you call me Monsieur de Courfeyrac again, I shall call you Mother de Veuvain. Now, speak, what is it? What do you want?"

"There is somebody who wishes to speak to you."

"Who is it?"

"I don't know."

"Where is he?"

"In my lodge."

"The devil!" said Courfeyrac.

"But he has been waiting more than an hour for you to come home!" replied the portress.

At the same time, a sort of young working-man, thin, pale, small, freckled, dressed in a torn blouse and patched pantaloons of ribbed velvet, and who had rather the appearance of a girl in boy's clothes than of a man, came out of the lodge and said to Courfeyrac in a voice which, to be sure, was not the least in the world a woman's voice.

"Monsieur Marius, if you please?"

"He is not in."

"Will he be in this evening?"

"I don't know anything about it."

And Courfeyrac added: "As for myself, I shall not be in."

The young man looked fixedly at him, and asked him:

"Why so?"

"Because."

"Where are you going then?"

"What is that to you?"

"Do you want me to carry your box?"

"I am going to the barricades."

"Do you want me to go with you?"

"If you like," answered Courfeyrac. "The road is free; the streets belong to everybody."

And he ran off to rejoin his friends. When he had rejoined them, he gave the box to one of them to carry. It was not until a quarter of an hour afterwards that he perceived that the young man had in fact followed them.

A mob does not go precisely where it wishes. A gust of wind carries it along. They went beyond Saint Merry and found themselves, without really knowing how, in the Rue Saint Denis.

BOOK IX—CORINTH

HISTORY OF CORINTH FROM ITS FOUNDATION

The Parisians who, to-day, upon entering the Rue Rambuteau from the side of the markets, notice on their right, opposite the Rue Mondétour, a basket-maker's shop, with a basket for a sign, in the shape of the Emperor Napoleon the Great, with this inscription:

NAPOLÉON EST FAIT
TOUT EN OSIER,[1]

do not suspect the terrible scenes which this very place saw thirty years ago.

Here were the Rue de la Chanvrerie, which the old signs spelled Chanverrerie, and the celebrated wine-shop called Corinth.

Permit us to recur, for the sake of clearness, to the simple means already employed by us for Waterloo. Those who would picture to themselves with sufficient exactness the confused blocks of houses which stood at that period near the Pointe Saint Eustache, at the northeast corner of the markets of Paris, where is now the mouth of the Rue Rambuteau, have only to figure to themselves, touching the Rue Saint Denis at its summit, and the markets at its base, an N, of which the two vertical strokes would be the Rue de la Grande Truanderie and the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and the Rue de la Petite Truanderie would make the transverse stroke. The old Rue Mondétour cut the three strokes at the most awkward angles. So that the labyrinthine entanglement of these four streets sufficed to make, in a space of four hundred square yards, between the markets and the Rue Saint Denis, in one direction, and between the Rue du Cygne and the Rue des Prêcheurs in the other direction, seven islets of houses, oddly intersecting, of various sizes, placed crosswise and as if by chance, and separated but slightly, like blocks of stone in a stone yard, by narrow crevices.

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[1] NAPOLEON IS MADE,
ALL OF WILLOW BRAID.

We say narrow crevices, and we cannot give a more just idea of those obscure, contracted, angular lanes, bordered by ruins eight stories high. These houses were so dilapidated, that in the Rues de la Chanvrerie and de la Petite Truanderie, the fronts were shored up with beams, reaching from one house to another. The street was narrow and the gutter wide, the passer walked along a pavement which was always wet, beside shops that were like cellars, great stone blocks encircled with iron, immense garbage heaps, and alley gates armed with enormous and venerable gratings. The Rue Rambuteau has devastated all this.

The name Mondétour pictures marvellously well the windings of all this route. A little further along you found them still better expressed by the *Rue Pirouette,* which ran into the Rue Mondétour.

The passer who came from the Rue Saint Denis into the Rue de la Chanvrerie saw it gradually narrow away before him as if he had entered an elongated funnel. At the end of the street, which was very short, he found the passage barred on the market side, and he would have thought himself in a cul-de-sac, if he had not perceived on the right and on the left two black openings by which he could escape. These were the Rue Mondétour, which communicated on the one side with the Rue des Prêcheurs, on the other with the Rues du Cygne and Petite Truanderie. At the end of this sort of cul-de-sac, at the corner of the opening on the right, might be seen a house lower than the rest, and forming a kind of cape on the street.

In this house, only two stories high, had been festively installed for three hundred years an illustrious wine-shop. This wine-shop raised a joyful sound in the very place which old Théophile has rendered famous in these two lines:

Là branle le squelette horrible
D'un pauvre amant qui se pendit.[1]

The location was good. The proprietorship descended from father to son.

As we have said, Corinth was one of the meeting, if not rallying places, of Courfeyrac and his friends. It was Grantaire who had discovered Corinth. They drank there, they ate there, they shouted there;

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[1] There rattles the horrible skeleton of a poor lover who hung himself.

they paid little, they paid poorly, they did not pay at all, they were always welcome. Father Hucheloup was a goodman.

Hucheloup, a goodman, we have just said, was a cook with moustaches: an amusing variety. He had always an ill-humoured face, seemed to wish to intimidate his customers, grumbled at people who came to his house, and appeared more disposed to pick a quarrel with them than to serve them their soup. And still, we maintain, they were always welcome. This oddity had brought custom to his shop, and led young men to him, saying to each other: "Come and hear Father Hucheloup grumble." He had been a fencing-master. He would suddenly burst out laughing. Coarse voice, good devil. His was a comic heart, with a tragic face; he asked nothing better than to frighten you, much like those snuff-boxes which have the shape of a pistol. The discharge is a sneeze.

His wife was Mother Hucheloup, a bearded creature, and very ugly.

Towards 1830, Father Hucheloup died. His widow, scarcely consolable, continued the wine-shop. But the cuisine degenerated and became execrable, the wine, which had always been bad became frightful. Courfeyrac and his friends continued to go to Corinth, however —"from pity," said Bossuet.

Widow Hucheloup was short-winded and deformed, with memories of the country. She relieved their tiresomeness by her pronunciation. She had a way of her own of saying things which spiced her village and spring-time reminiscences. It had once been her fortune, she affirmed, to hear "the lead-breasts sing in the hawkthorns."

The room on the first floor, in which was "the restaurant," was a long and wide room, encumbered with stools, crickets, chairs, benches, and tables, and a rickety old billiard-table. It was reached by the spiral staircase which terminated at the corner of the room in a square hole like the hatchway of a ship.

This room, lighted by a single narrow window and by a lamp which was always burning, had the appearance of a garret. All the pieces of furniture on four legs behaved as if they had but three.

Two servants, called Chowder and Fricassee, and for whom nobody had ever known any other names, helped Ma'am Hucheloup to put upon the tables the pitchers of blue wine and the various broths which were served to the hungry in earthen dishes. Chowder, fat, round, red, and boisterous, former favourite sultana of the defunct Hucheloup, was uglier than any mythological monster; still, as it is fitting that the servant should always keep behind the mistress, she was less ugly than Ma'am Hucheloup. Fricassee, long, delicate, white with a lymphatic whiteness, rings around her eyes, eyelids drooping, always exhausted and dejected, subject to what might be called chronic weariness, up first, in bed last, served everybody, even the other servant, mildly and in silence, smiling through fatigue with a sort of vague sleepy smile.

NIGHT BEGINS TO GATHER

The place was indeed admirably chosen, the entrance of the street wide, the further end contracted and like a cul-de-sac, Corinth throttling it, Rue Mondétour easy to bar at the right and left, no attack possible except from the Rue Saint Denis, that is from the front, and without cover.

At the irruption of the mob, dismay seized the whole street, not a passer but had gone into eclipse. In a flash, at the end, on the right, on the left, shops, stalls, alley gates, windows, blinds, dormer-windows, shutters of every size, were closed from the ground to the roofs. One frightened old woman had fixed a mattress before her window on two clothes poles, as a shield against the musketry. The wine-shop was the only house which remained open; and that for a good reason, because the band had rushed into it. "Oh my God! Oh my God!" sighed Ma'am Hucheloup.

Bossuet had gone down to meet Courfeyrac.

Joly, who had come to the window, cried:

"Courfeyrac, you bust take ad ubbrella. You will catch cold."

Meanwhile, in a few minutes, twenty iron bars had been wrested from the grated front of the wine-shop, twenty yards of pavement had been torn up; Gavroche and Bahorel had seized on its passage and tipped over the dray of a lime merchant named Anceau, this dray contained three barrels full of lime, which they had placed under the piles of paving stones; Enjolras had opened the trap-door of the cellar and all the widow Hucheloup's empty casks had gone to flank the lime barrels; Feuilly, with his fingers accustomed to colour the delicate folds of fans, had buttressed the barrels and the dray with two massive heaps of stones. Stones improvised like the rest, and obtained nobody knows where. Some shoring-timbers had been pulled down from the front of a neighbouring house and laid upon the casks. When Bossuet and Courfeyrac turned round, half the street was already barred by a rampart higher than a man. There is nothing like the popular hand to build whatever can be built by demolishing.

Chowder and Fricassee had joined the labourers. Fricassee went back and forth loaded with rubbish. Her weariness contributed to the barricade. She served paving stones, as she would have served wine, with a sleepy air.

An omnibus with two white horses passed at the end of the street.

Bossuet sprang over the pavement, ran, stopped the driver, made the passengers get down, gave his hand "to the ladies," dismissed the conductor, and came back with the vehicle, leading the horses by the bridle.

"An omnibus," said he, "doesn't pass Corinth."

A moment later the horses were unhitched and going off at will through the Rue Mondétour, and the omnibus, lying on its side, completed the barring of the street.

Ma'am Hucheloup, completely upset, had taken refuge in the first story.

Her eyes were wandering, and she looked without seeing, crying in a whisper. Her cries were dismayed and dared not come out of her throat.

"It is the end of the world," she murmured.

ATTEMPT AT CONSOLATION UPON THE WIDOW HUCHELOUP

Courfeyrac, even while helping to demolish the wine-shop, sought to console the widowed landlady.

"Mother Hucheloup, were you not complaining the other day that you had been summoned and fined because Fricassee had shaken a rug out of your window?"

"Yes, my good Monsieur Courfeyrac. Oh! my God! are you going to put that table also into your horror? And besides that, for the rug, and also for a flower-pot which fell from the attic into the street, the government fined me a hundred francs. If that isn't an abomination!"

"Well, Mother Hucheloup, we are avenging you."

Mother Hucheloup, in this reparation which they were making her, did not seem to very well understand her advantage. She was satisfied after the manner of that Arab woman who, having received a blow from her husband, went to complain to her father, crying for vengeance and saying: "Father, you owe my husband affront for affront." The father asked: "Upon which cheek did you receive the blow?" "Upon the left cheek." The father struck the right cheek, and said: "Now you are satisfied. Go and tell your husband that he has struck my daughter, but that I have struck his wife."

The rain had ceased. Recruits had arrived. Some working-men had brought under their blouses a keg of powder, a hamper containing bottles of vitriol, two or three carnival torches, and a basket full of lamps, "relics of the king's fête," which fête was quiet recent, having taken place the 1st of May. It was said that these supplies came from a grocer of the Faubourg Saint Antoine, named Pépin. They broke the only lamp in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the lamp opposite the Rue Saint Denis, and all the lamps in the surrounding streets, Mondétour, du Cygne, des Prêcheurs, and de la Grande and de la Petite Truanderie.

Enjolras, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac, directed everything. Two barricades were now building at the same time, both resting on the house of Corinth and making a right angle; the larger one closed the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the other closed the Rue Mondétour in the direction of the Rue du Cygne. This last barricade, very narrow, was constructed only of casks and paving stones. There were about fifty labourers there, some thirty armed with muskets, for, on their way, they had effected a wholesale loan from an armourer's shop.

Nothing could be more fantastic and more motley than this band. One had a short-jacket, a cavalry sabre, and two horse-pistols; another was in shirt sleeves, with a round hat, and a powder-horn hung at his side; a third had a breast-plate of nine sheets of brown paper, and was armed with a saddler's awl. There was one of them who cried: *"Let us exterminate to the last man, and die on the point of our bayonets!"* This man had no bayonet. Another displayed over his coat a cross-belt and cartridge-box of the National Guard, with the box cover adorned with this inscription in red cloth: *Public Order.* Many muskets bearing the numbers of their legions, few hats, no cravats, many bare arms, some pikes. Add to this all ages, all faces, small pale young men, bronzed wharfmen. All were hurrying, and, while helping each other, they talked about the possible chances—that they would have help by three o'clock in the morning—that they were sure of one regiment—that Paris would rise. Terrible subjects, with which were mingled a sort of cordial joviality. One would have said they were brothers, they did not know each other's names. Great perils have this beauty, that they bring to light the fraternity of strangers.

A fire had been kindled in the kitchen, and they were melting pitchers, dishes, forks, all the pewter ware of the wine-shop into bullets. They drank throught it all. Percussion-caps and buckshot rolled pell-mell upon the tables with glasses of wine. In the billiard-room, Ma'am Hucheloup, Chowder, and Fricassee, variously modified by terror, one being stupefied, another breathless, the third alert, were tearing up old linen and making lint; three insurgents assisted them, three long-haired, bearded, and moustached wags who tore up the cloth with the fingers of a linen-draper, and who made them tremble.

The man of tall stature whom Courfeyrac, Combeferre, and Enjolras had noticed, at the moment he joined the company at the corner of the Rue des Billettes, was working on the little barricade, and making himself useful there. Gavroche worked on the large one. As for the young man who had waited for Courfeyrac at his house, and had asked him for Monsieur Marius, he had disappeared very nearly at the moment the omnibus was overturned.

Gavroche, completely carried away and radiant, had charged himself with making all ready. He went, came, mounted, descended, remounted, bustled, sparkled. He seemed to be there for the encouragement of all. Had he a spur? yes, certainly, his misery; had he wings? yes, certainly, his joy. Gavroche was a whirlwind. They saw him incessantly, they heard him constantly. He filled the air, being everywhere at once. He was a kind of stimulating ubiquity; no stop possible with him. The enormous barricade felt him on its back. He vexed the loungers, he excited the idle, he reanimated the weary, he provoked the thoughtful, kept some in cheerfulness, others in breath, others in anger, all in motion, piqued a student, was biting to a workingman; took position, stopped, started on, flitted above the tumult and the effort, leaped from these to those, murmured, hummed, and stirred up the whole train; the fly on the revolutionary coach.

Perpetual motion was in his little arms, and perpetual clamour in his little lungs.

"Cheerly? more paving stones? more barrels? more machines? where are there any? A basket of plaster, to stop that hole. It is too small, your barricade. It must go higher. Pile on everything, brace it with everything. Break up the house. A barricade is Mother Gibou's tea-party. Hold on, there is a glass-door."

This made the labourers exclaim:

"A glass-door? what do you want us to do with a glass-door, tubercle?"

"Hercules yourselves?" retorted Gavroche. "A glass-door in a barricade is excellent. It doesn't prevent attacking it, but it bothers them in taking it. Then you have never hooked apples over a wall with broken bottles on it? A glass-door, it will cut the corns of the National Guards, when they try to climb over the barricade. Golly! glass is the devil. Ah, now, you haven't an unbridled imagination, my comrades."

Still, he was furious at his pistol without a hammer. He went from one to another, demanding: "A musket? I want a musket? Why don't you give me a musket?"

"A musket for you?" said Combeferre.

"Well?" replied Gavroche, "why not? I had one in 1830, in the dispute with Charles X."

Enjolras shrugged his shoulders.

"When there are enough for the men, we will give them to the children."

Gavroche turned fiercely, and answered him:

"If you are killed before me, I will take yours."

"Gamin!" said Enjolras.

"Smooth-face?" said Gavroche.

A stray dandy who was lounging at the end of the street made a diversion.

Gavroche cried to him:

"Come with us, young man? Well, this poor old country, you won't do anything for her then?"

The dandy fled.

THE PREPARATIONS

The journals of the time which said that the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, that *almost inexpugnable construction,* as they call it, attained the level of a second story, were mistaken. The fact is, that it did not exceed an average height of six or seven feet. It was built in such a manner that the combatants could, at will, either disappear behind the wall, or look over it, and even scale the crest of it by means of a quadruple range of paving-stones superposed and arranged like steps on the inner side. The front of the barricade on the outside, composed of piles of paving-stones and of barrels bound together by timbers and boards which were interlocked in the wheels of the Anceau cart and the overturned omnibus, had a bristling and inextricable aspect.

An opening sufficient for a man to pass through had been left between the wall of the houses and the extremity of the barricade furthest from the wine-shop, so that a sortie was possible. The pole of the omnibus was turned directly up and held with ropes, and a red flag, fixed to this pole, floated over the barricade.

The little Mondétour barricade, hidden behind the wine-shop, was not visible. The two barricades united formed a staunch redoubt. Enjolras and Courfeyrac had not thought proper to barricade the other end of the Rue Mondétour which opens a passage to the markets through the Rue des Prêcheurs, wishing doubtless to preserve a possible communication with the outside, and having little dread of being attacked from the dangerous and difficult alley des Prêcheurs.

All this labour was accomplished without hindrance in less than an hour, and without this handful of bold men seeing a bearskin-cap or a bayonet arise. The few bourgeois who still ventured at that period of the émeute into the Rue Saint Denis cast a glance down the Rue de la Chanvrerie, perceived the barricade, and redoubled their pace.

The two barricades finished, the flag run up, a table was dragged out of the wine-shop; and Courfeyrac mounted upon the table. Enjolras brought the square box and Courfeyrac opened it. This box was filled with cartridges. When they saw the cartridges, there was a shudder among the bravest, and a moment of silence.

Courfeyrac distributed them with a smile.

Each one received thirty cartridges. Many had powder and set about making others with the balls which they were moulding. As for the keg of powder, it was on a table by itself near the door, and it was reserved.

The long-roll which was running through all Paris was not discontinued, but it had got to be only a montonous sound to which they paid no more attention. This sound sometimes receded, sometimes approached, with melancholy undulations.

They loaded their muskets and their carbines all together, without precipitation, with a solemn gravity. Enjolras placed three sentinels outside the barricades, one in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the second in the Rue des Prêcheurs, the third at the corner of la Petite Truanderie.

Then, the barricades built, the posts assigned, the muskets loaded, the videttes placed, alone in these fearful streets in which there were now no passers, surrounded by these dumb, and as it were dead houses, which throbbed with no human motion, enwrapped by the deepening shadows of the twilight, which was beginning to fall, in the midst of this obscurity and this silence, through which they felt the advance of something inexpressibly tragical and terrifying, isolated, armed, determined, tranquil, they waited.

THE MAN RECRUITED IN THE RUE DES BILLETTES

It was now quite night, nothing came. There were only confused sounds, and at intervals volleys of musketry; but rare, ill-sustained, and distant. This respite, which was thus prolonged, was a sign that the government was taking its time, and massing its forces. These fifty men were awaiting sixty thousand.

Enjolras felt himself possessed by that impatience which seizes strong souls on the threshold of formidable events. He went to find Gavroche who had set himself to making cartridges in the basement room by the doubtful light of two candles placed upon the counter through precaution on account of the powder scattered over the tables. These two candles threw no rays outside. The insurgents moreover had taken care not to have any lights in the upper stories.

Gavroche at this moment was very much engaged, not exactly with his cartridges.

The man from the Rue des Billettes had just entered the basement room and had taken a seat at the table which was least lighted. An infantry musket of large model had fallen to his lot, and he held it between his knees. Gavroche hitherto, distracted by a hundred "amusing" things, had not even seen this man.

When he came in, Gavroche mechanically followed him with his eyes, admiring his musket, then, suddenly, when the man had sat down, the *gamin* arose. Had any one watched this man up to this time, he would have seen him observe everything in the barricade and in the band insurgents with a singular attention; but since he had come into the room, he had fallen into a kind of meditation and appeared to see nothing more of what was going on. The *gamin* approached this thoughtful personage, and began to turn about him on the points of his toes as one walks when near somebody whom he fears to awake. At the same time, over his childish face, at once so saucy and so serious, so flighty and so profound, so cheerful and so touching, there passed all those grimaces of the old which signify: "Oh bah! impossible! I am befogged! I am dreaming! can it be? no, it isn't! why yes! why no!" etc. Gavroche balanced himself upon his heels, clenched both fists in his pockets, twisted his neck like a bird, expended in one measureless pout all the sagacity of his lower lip. He was stupefied, uncertain, credulous, convinced, bewildered. He had the appearance of the chief of the eunuchs in the slave market discovering a Venus among dumpies, and the air of an amateur recognising a Raphael in a heap of daubs. Everything in him was at work, the instinct which scents and the intellect which combines. It was evident that an event had occurred with Gavroche.

It was in the deepest of this meditation that Enjolras accosted him.

"You are small," said Enjolras, "nobody will see you. Go out of the barricades, glide along by the houses, look about the streets a little, and come and tell me what is going on."

Gavroche straightened himself up.

"Little folks are good for something then! that is very lucky! I will go! meantime, trust the little folks, distrust the big——" And Gavroche, raising his head and lowering his voice, added, pointing to the man of the Rue des Billettes:

"You see that big fellow there?"

"Well?"

"He is a spy."

"You are sure?"

"It isn't a fortnight since he pulled me by the ear off the cornice of the Pont Royal where I was taking the air."

Enjolras hastily left the *gamin,* and murmured a few words very low to a working-man from the wine docks who was there. The working-man went out of the room and returned almost immediately, accompanied by three others. The four men, four broad-shouldered porters, placed themselves, without doing anything which could attract attention, behind the table on which the man of the Rue des Billettes was leaning. They were evidently ready to throw themselves upon him.

Then Enjolras approached the man and asked him:

"Who are you?"

At this abrupt question, the man gave a start. He looked straight to the bottom of Enjolras' frank eye and appeared to catch his thought. He smiled with a smile which, of all things in the world, was the most disdainful, the most energetic, and the most resolute, and answered with a haughty gravity:

"I see how it is——Well, yes!"

"You are a spy?"

"I am an officer of the government."

"Your name is?"

"Javert."

Enjolras made a sign to the four men. In a twinkling, before Javert had had time to turn around, he was collared, thrown down, bound, searched.

They found upon him a little round card framed between two glasses, and bearing on one side the arms of France, engraved with this legend: *Surveillance et vigilance,* and on the other side this endorsement: Javert, inspector of police, aged fifty-two, and the signature of the prefect of police of the time, M. Gisquet.

He had besides his watch and his purse, which contained a few gold pieces. They left him his purse and his watch. Under the watch, at the bottom of his fob, they felt and seized a paper in an envelope, which Enjolras opened, and on which he read these six lines, written by the prefect's own hand.

> "As soon as his political mission is fulfilled, Inspector Javert will ascertain, by a special examination, whether it be true that malefactors have resorts on the slope of the right bank of the Seine, near the bridge of Jena."

The search finished, they raised Javert, tied his arms behind his back, and fastened him in the middle of the basement-room to that celebrated post which had formerly given its name to the wine-shop.

Gavroche, who had witnessed the whole scene and approved the whole by silent nods of his head, approached Javert and said to him:

"The mouse has caught the cat."

All this was executed so rapidly that it was finished as soon as it was perceived about the wine-shop. Javert had not uttered a cry. Seeing Javert tied to the post, Courfeyrac, Bossuet, Joly, Combeferre, and the men scattered about the two barricades, ran in.

Javert, backed up against the post, and so surrounded with ropes that he could make no movement, held up his head with the intrepid serenity of the man who has never lied.

"It is a spy," said Enjolras.

And turning towards Javert:

"You will be shot ten minutes before the barricade is taken."

Javert replied in his most imperious tone:

"Why not immediately?"

"We are economising powder."

"Then do it with a knife."

"Spy," said the handsome Enjolras, "we are judges, not assassins."

Then he called Gavroche.

"You! go about your business! Do what I told you."

"I am going," cried Gavroche.

And stopping just as he was starting:

"By the way, you will give me his musket!" And he added: "I leave you the musician, but I want the clarionet."

The *gamin* made a military salute, and sprang gaily through the opening in the large barricade.

SEVERAL INTERROGATION POINTS CONCERNING ONE LE CABUC, WHO PERHAPS WAS NOT LE CABUC

The tragic picture which we have commenced would not be complete, the reader would not see in their exact and real relief these grand moments of social parturition and of revolutionary birth in which there is convulsion mingled with effort, were we to omit, in the outline here sketched, an incident full of epic and savage horror which occurred almost immediately after Gavroche's departure.

Mobs, as we know, are like snowballs, and gather a heap of tumultuous men as they roll. These men do not ask one another whence they come. Among the passers who had joined themselves to the company led by Enjolras, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac, there was a person wearing a porter's waistcoat worn out at the shoulders, who gesticulated and vociferated and had the appearance of a sort of savage drunkard. This man, who was named or nicknamed Le Cabuc, and who was moreover entirely unknown to those who attempted to recognise him, very drunk, or feigning to be, was seated with a few others at a table which they had brought outside of the wine-shop. This Cabuc, while inciting those to drink who were with him, seemed to gaze with an air of reflection upon the large house at the back of the barricade, the five stories of which overlooked the whole street and faced towards the Rue Saint Denis. Suddenly he exclaimed:

"Comrades, do you know? it is from that house that we must fire. If we are at the windows, devil a one can come into the street."

"Yes, but the house is shut up," said one of the drinkers.

"Knock!"

"They won't open."

"Stave the door in!"

Le Cabuc runs to the door, which had a very massive knocker, and raps. The door does not open. He raps a second time. Nobody answers. A third rap. The same silence.

"Is there anybody here?" cries Le Cabuc.

Nothing stirs.

Then he seizes a musket and begins to beat the door with the butt. It was an old alley door, arched, low, narrow, solid, entirely of oak, lined on the inside with sheet-iron and with iron braces, a genuine postern of a bastille. The blows made the house tremble, but did not shake the door.

Nevertheless it is probable that the inhabitants were alarmed, for they finally saw a little square window on the third story light up and open, and there appeared at this window a candle, and the pious and frightened face of a grey-haired goodman who was the porter.

The man who was knocking, stopped.

"Messieurs," asked the porter, "what do you wish?"

"Open!" said Le Cabuc.

"Messieurs, that cannot be."

"Open, I tell you!"

"Impossible, messieurs!"

Le Cabuc took his musket and aimed at the porter's head, but as he was below, and it was very dark, the porter did not see him.

"Yes, or no, will you open?"

"No, messieurs!"

"You say no?"

"I say no, my good—"

The porter did not finish. The musket went off; the ball entered under his chin and passed out at the back of the neck, passing through the jugular. The old man sank down without a sigh. The candle fell and was extinguished, and nothing could now be seen but an immovable head lying on the edge of the window, and a little whitish smoke floating towards the roof.

"That's it!" said Le Cabuc, letting the butt of his musket drop on the pavement.

Hardly had he uttered these words when he felt a hand pounce upon his shoulder with the weight of an eagle's talons, and heard a voice which said to him:

"On your knees."

The murderer turned and saw before him the white cold face of Enjolras. Enjolras had a pistol in his hand.

At the explosion, he had come up.

He had grasped with his left hand Le Cabuc's collar, blouse, shirt, and suspenders.

"On your knees," repeated he.

And with a majestic movement the slender young man of twenty bent the broad-shouldered and robust porter like a reed and made him kneel in the mud. Le Cabuc tried to resist, but he seemed to have been seized by a superhuman grasp.

Pale, his neck bare, his hair flying, Enjolras, with his woman's face, had at that moment an inexpressible something of the ancient Themis. His distended nostrils, his downcast eyes, gave to his implacable Greek profile that expression of wrath and that expression of chastity which from the point of view of the ancient world belonged to justice.

The whole barricade ran up, then all ranged in a circle at a distance, feeling that it was impossible to utter a word in presence of the act which they were about to witness.

Le Cabuc, vanquished, no longer attempted to defend himself, but trembled in every limb. Enjolras let go of him and took out his watch.

"Collect your thoughts," said he. "Pray or think. You have one minute."

"Pardon!" murmured the murderer, then he bowed his head and mumbled some inarticulate oaths.

Enjolras did not take his eyes off his watch; he let the minute pass, then he put his watch back into his fob. This done, he took Le Cabuc, who was writhing against his knees and howling, by the hair, and placed the muzzle of his pistol at his ear. Many of those intrepid men, who had so tranquilly entered upon the most terrible of enterprises, turned away their heads.

They heard the explosion, the assassin fell face forward on the pavement, and Enjolras straightened up and cast about him his look determined and severe.

Then he pushed the body away with his foot, and said:

"Throw that outside."

Three men lifted the body of the wretch, which was quivering with the last mechanical convulsions of the life that had flown, and threw it over the small barricade into the little Rue Mondétour.

Enjolras had remained thoughtful. Shadow, mysterious and grand, was slowly spreading over his fearful serenity. He suddenly raised his voice. There was a silence.

"Citizens," said Enjolras, "what that man did is horrible, and what I have done is terrible. He killed, that is why I killed him. I was forced to do it, for the insurrection must have its discipline. Assassination is a still greater crime here than elsewhere; we are under the eye of the revolution, we are the priests of the republic, we are the sacramental host of duty, and none must be able to calumniate our combat. I therefore judged and condemned that man to death. As for myself, compelled to do what I have done, but abhorring it, I have judged myself also, and you shall soon see to what I have sentenced myself."

Those who heard shuddered.

"We will share your fate," cried Combeferre.

"So be it," added Enjolras. "A word more. In executing that man, I obeyed necessity; but necessity is a monster of the old world, the name of necessity is Fatality. Now the law of progress is, that monsters disappear before angels, and that Fatality vanish before Fraternity. This is not a moment to pronounce the word love. No matter, I pronounce it, and I glorify it. Love, thine is the future. Death, I use thee, but I hate thee. Citizens, there shall be in the future neither darkness nor thunderbolts; neither ferocious ignorance nor blood for blood. As Satan shall be no more, so Michael shall be no more. In the future no man shall slay his fellow, the earth shall be radiant, the human race shall love. It will come, citizens, that day when all shall be concord, harmony, light, joy, and life; it will come, and it is that it may come that we are going to die."

Enjolras was silent. His virgin lips closed; and he remained some time standing on the spot where he had spilled blood, in marble immobility. His fixed eye made all about him speak low.

Jean Prouvaire and Combeferre silently grasped hands, and, leaning upon one another in the corner of the barricade, considered, with an admiration not unmingled with compassion, this severe young man, executioner and priest, luminous like the crystal, and rock also.

Let us say right here that later, after the action, when the corpses were carried to the Morgue and searched, there was a police officer's card found on Le Cabuc. The author of this book had in his own hands, in 1848, the special report made on that subject to the prefect of police in 1832.

Let us add that, if we are to believe a police tradition, strange, but probably well founded, Le Cabuc was Claquesous. The fact is, that after the death of Le Cabuc, nothing more was heard of Claquesous. Claquesous left no trace on his disappearance, he would seem to have been amalgamated with the invisible. His life had been darkness, his end was night.

The whole insurgent group were still under the emotion of this tragic trial, so quickly instituted and so quickly terminated, when Courfeyrac again saw in the barricade the small young man who in the morning had called at his house for Marius.

This boy, who had a bold and reckless air, had come at night to rejoin the insurgents.

BOOK X—THE GRANDEURS OF DESPAIR

THE FLAG: FIRST ACT

Nothing came yet. The clock of Saint Merry had struck ten. Enjolras and Combeferre had sat down, carbine in hand, near the opening of the great barricade. They were not talking, they were listening; seeking to catch even the faintest and most distant sound of a march.

Suddenly, in the midst of this dismal calm, a clear, young, cheerful voice, which seemed to come from the Rue Saint Denis, arose and began to sing distinctly to the old popular air, *Au clair de la lune,* these lines which ended in a sort of cry similar to the crow of a cock:

Mon nez est en larmes,
Mon ami Bugeaud,
Prêt-moi tes gendarmes
Pour leur dire un mot.

En capote bleue,
La poule au shako,
Voici la banlieue!
Co-cocorico![1]

They grasped each other by the hand:

"It is Gavroche," said Enjolras.

"He is warning us," said Combeferre.

A headlong run startled the empty street; they saw a creature nimbler than a clown climb over the omnibus, and Gavroche bounded into the barricade all breathless, saying:

"My musket! Here they are."

An electric thrill ran through the whole barricade, and a moving of hands was heard, feeling for their muskets.

"Do you want my carbine?" said Enjolras to the *gamin.*

"I want the big musket," answered Gavroche.

And he took Javert's musket.

Two sentinels had been driven back, and had come in almost at the same time as Gavroche. They were the sentinel from the end of the street, and the vidette from la Petite Truanderie. The vidette in the little Rue des Prêcheurs remained at his post, which indicated that nothing was coming from the direction of the bridges and the markets.

The Rue de la Chanvrerie, in which a few paving-stones were dimly visible by the reflection of the light which was thrown upon the flag, offered to the insurgents the appearance of a great black porch opening into a cloud of smoke.

Every man had taken his post for the combat.

Suddenly, from the depth of that shadow, a voice, so much the more ominous, because nobody could be seen, and because it seemed as if it were the obscurity itself which was speaking, cried:

"Who is there?"

[1] My nose is in tears,
My good friend Bugeaud,
Just lend me your spears
To tell them my woe.
In blue cassimere,
And feathered shako,
The banlieue is here!
Co-cocorico!

At the same time they heard the click of the levelled muskets.

Enjolras answered in a lofty and ringing tone:

"French Revolution!"

"Fire!" said the voice.

A flash empurpled all the façades on the street, as if the door of a furnace were opened and suddenly closed.

A fearful explosion burst over the barricade. The red flag fell. The volley had been so heavy and so dense that it had cut the staff, that is to say, the very point of the pole of the omnibus. Some balls, which ricocheted from the cornices of the houses, entered the barricade and wounded several men.

The impression produced by this first charge was freezing. The attack was impetuous, and such as to make the boldest ponder. It was evident that they had to do with a whole regiment at least.

"Comrades," cried Courfeyrac, "don't waste the powder. Let us wait to reply till they come into the street."

"And, first of all," said Enjolras, "let us hoist the flag again!"

He picked up the flag which had fallen just at his feet.

They heard from without the rattling of the ramrods in the muskets: the troops were reloading.

Enjolras continued:

"Who is there here who has courage? who replants the flag on the barricade?"

Nobody answered. To mount the barricade at the moment when without doubt it was aimed at anew, was simply death. The bravest hesitates to sentence himself, Enjolras himself felt a shudder. He repeated:

"Nobody volunteers!"

THE FLAG: SECOND ACT

Since they had arrived at Corinth and had commenced building the barricade, hardly any attention had been paid to Father Mabeuf. M. Mabeuf, however, had not left the company. He had entered the ground floor of the wine-shop and sat down behind the counter. There he had been, so to speak, annihilated in himself. When everybody had gone to take his place for the combat, there remained in the basement room only Javert tied to the post, an insurgent with drawn sabre watching Javert, and he, Mabeuf. At the moment of the attack, at the discharge, the physical shock reached him, and, as it were, awakened him; he rose suddenly, crossed the room, and at the instant when Enjolras repeated his appeal: "Nobody volunteers?" they saw the old man appear in the doorway of the wine-shop.

His presence produced some commotion in the group. A cry arose: "It is the Voter! it is the Conventionist! it is the Representative of the people!"

It is probable that he did not hear.

He walked straight to Enjolras, the insurgents fell back before him with a religious awe, he snatched the flag from Enjolras, who drew back petrified, and then, nobody daring to stop him, or to aid him, this old man of eighty, with shaking head but firm foot, began to climb slowly up the stairway of paving-stones built into the barricade. It was so gloomy and so grand that all about him cried: "Hats off!" At each step it was frightful; his white hair, his decrepit face, his large forehead bald and wrinkled, his hollow eyes, his quivering and open mouth, his old arm raising the red banner, surged up out of the shadow and grew grand in the bloody light of the torch, and they seemed to see the ghost of '93 rising out of the earth, the flag of terror in its hand.

When he was on the top of the last step, when this trembling and terrible phantom, standing upon that mound of rubbish before twelve hundred invisible muskets, rose up, in the face of death and as if he were stronger than it, the whole barricade had in the darkness a supernatural and colossal appearance.

There was one of those silences which occur only in presence of prodigies.

In the midst of this silence the old man waved the red flag and cried: "*Vive la révolution! vive la république!* fraternity! equality! and death!"

They heard from the barricade a low and rapid muttering like the murmur of a hurried priest dispatching a prayer. It was probably the commissary of police who was making the legal summons at the other end of the street.

Then the same ringing voice which had cried: "Who is there?" cried:

"Disperse!"

M. Mabeuf, pallid, haggard, his eyes illumined by the mournful fires of insanity, raised the flag above his head and repeated:

"Vive la république!"

"Fire!" said the voice.

A second discharge, like a shower of grape, beat against the barricade.

The old man fell upon his knees, then rose up, let the flag drop, and fell backwards upon the pavement within, like a log, at full length with his arms crossed.

Streams of blood ran from beneath him. His old face, pale and sad, seemed to behold the sky.

One of those emotions superior to man, which make us forget even to defend ourselves, seized the insurgents, and they approached the corpse with a respectful dismay.

"What men these regicides are!" said Enjolras.

Courfeyrac bent over to Enjolras' ear.

"This is only for you, and I don't wish to diminish the enthusiasm. But he was anything but a regicide. I knew him. His name was Father Mabeuf. I don't know what ailed him to-day. But he was a brave blockhead. Just look at his head."

"Blockhead and Brutus heart," answered Enjolras.

Then he raised his voice:

"Citizens! This is the example which the old give to the young. We hesitated, he came! we fell back, he advanced! Behold what those who tremble with old age teach those who tremble with fear! This patriarch is august in the sight of the country. He has had a long life and a magnificent death! Now let us protect his corpse, let every one defend this old man dead as he would defend his father living, and let his presence among us make the barricade impregnable!"

A murmur of gloomy and determined adhesion followed these words.

Enjolras stooped down, raised the old man's head, and timidly kissed him on the forehead, then separating his arms, and handling the dead with a tender care, as if he feared to hurt him, he took off his coat, showed the bleeding holes to all, and said:

"There now is our flag."

GAVROCHE WOULD HAVE DONE BETTER TO ACCEPT ENJOLRAS' CARBINE

THEY threw a long black shawl belonging to the widow Hucheloup over Father Mabeuf. Six men made a barrow of their muskets, they laid the corpse upon it, and they bore it, bare-headed, with a solemn slowness, to the large table in the basement room.

These men, completely absorbed in the grave and sacred thing which they were doing, no longer thought of the perilous situation in which they were.

When the corpse passed near Javert, who was still impassible, Enjolras said to the spy:

"You! directly."

During this time little Gavroche, who alone had not left his post and had remained on the watch, thought he saw some men approaching the barricade with a stealthy step. Suddenly he cried:

"Take care!"

Courfeyrac, Enjolras, Jean Prouvaire, Combeferre, Joly, Bahorel, Bossuet, all sprang tumultuously from the wine-shop. There was hardly a moment to spare. They perceived a sparkling breadth of bayonets undulating above the barricade. Municipal Guards of tall stature were penetrating, some by climbing over the omnibus, others by the opening, pushing before them the *gamin,* who fell back, but did not fly.

The moment was critical. It was that first fearful instant of the inundation, when the stream rises to the level of the bank and when the water begins to infiltrate through the fissures in the dyke. A second more, and the barricade had been taken.

Bahorel sprang upon the first Municipal Guard who entered, and killed him at the very muzzle of his carbine; the second killed Bahorel with his bayonet. Another had already prostrated Courfeyrac, who was crying "Help!" The largest of all, a kind of colossus, marched upon Gavroche with fixed bayonet. The *gamin* took Javert's enormous musket in his little arms, aimed it resolutely at the giant, and pulled the trigger. Nothing went off. Javert had not loaded his musket. The Municipal Guard burst into a laugh and raised his bayonet over the child.

Before the bayonet touched Gavroche the musket dropped from the soldier's hands, a ball had struck the Municipal Guard in the middle of the forehead, and he fell on his back. A second ball struck the other Guard, who had assailed Courfeyrac, full in the breast, and threw him upon the pavement.

It was Marius who had just entered the barricade.

THE KEG OF POWDER

Marius, still hidden in the corner of the Rue Mondétour, had watched the first phase of the combat, irresolute and shuddering. However, he was not able long to resist that mysterious and sovereign infatuation which we may call the appeal of the abyss. Before the imminence of the danger, before the death of M. Mabeuf, that fatal enigma, before Bahorel slain. Courfeyrac crying "Help!" that child threatened, his friends to succour or to avenge, all hesitation had vanished, and he had rushed into the conflict, his two pistols in his hands. By the first shot he had saved Gavroche, and by the second delivered Courfeyrac.

At the shots, at the cries of the wounded Guards, the assailants had scaled the intrenchment, upon the summit of which could now be seen thronging Municipal guards, soldiers of the Line, National Guards of the banlieue, musket in hand. They already covered more than two-thirds of the wall, but they did not leap into the inclosure; they seemed to hesitate, fearing some snare. They looked into the obscure barricade as one would look into a den of lions. The light of the torch only lighted up their bayonets, their bearskin caps, and the upper part of their anxious and angry faces.

Marius had now no arms, he had thrown away his discharged pistols, but he had noticed the keg of powder in the basement room near the door.

As he turned half round, looking in that direction, a soldier aimed at him. At the moment the soldier aimed at Marius, a hand was laid upon the muzzle of the musket, and stopped it. It was somebody who had sprung forward, the young working-man with velvet pantaloons. The shot went off, passed through the hand, and perhaps also through the working-man, for he fell, but the ball did not reach Marius.

All this in the smoke, rather guessed than seen. Marius, who was entering the basement room, hardly noticed it. Still he had caught a dim glimpse of that musket directed at him, and that hand which had stopped it, and he had heard the shot. But in moments like that the things which we see, waver and rush headlong, and we stop for nothing. We feel ourselves vaguely pushed towards still deeper shadow, and all is cloud.

The insurgents, surprised, but not dismayed, had rallied. Enjolras had cried: "Wait! don't fire at random!" In the first confusion, in fact, they might hit one another. Most of them had gone up to the window of the second story and to the dormer windows, whence they commanded the assailants. The most determined, with Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, and Combeferre, had haughtily placed their backs to the houses in the rear, openly facing the ranks of soldiers and guards which crowded the barricade.

All this was accomplished without precipitation, with that strange and threatening gravity which precedes melées. On both sides they were taking aim, the muzzles of the guns almost touching; they were so near that they could talk with each other in an ordinary tone. Just as the spark was about to fly, an officer in a gorget and with huge epaulets, extended his sword and said:

"Take aim!"

"Fire!" said Enjolras.

The two explosions were simultaneous, and everything disappeared in the smoke.

A stinging and stifling smoke amid which writhed, with dull and feeble groans, the wounded and the dying.

When the smoke cleared away, on both sides the combatants were seen, thinned out, but still in the same places, and reloading their pieces in silence.

Suddenly, a thundering voice was heard, crying:

"Begone, or I'll blow up the barricade!"

All turned in the direction whence the voice came.

Marius had entered the basement room, and had taken the keg of powder, then he had profited by the smoke and the kind of obscure fog which filled the intrenched inclosure, to glide along the barricade as far as that cage of paving-stones in which the torch was fixed. To pull out the torch, to put the keg of powder in its place, to push the pile of paving-stones upon the keg, which stove it in, with a sort of terrible self-control—all this had been for Marius the work of stooping down and rising up; and now all, National Guards, Municipal Guards, officers, soldiers, grouped at the other extremity of the barricade, beheld him with horror, his foot upon the stones, the torch in his hand, his stern face lighted by a deadly resolution, bending the flame of the torch towards that formidable pile in which they discerned the broken barrel of powder, and uttering that terrific cry:

"Begone, or I'll blow up the barricade!"

Marius upon this barricade, after the octogenarian, was the vision of the young revolution after the apparition of the old.

"Blow up the barricade!" said a sergeant, "and yourself also!"

Marius answered:

"And myself also."

And he approached the torch to the keg of powder.

But there was no longer anybody on the wall. The assailants, leaving their dead and wounded, fled pell-mell and in disorder towards the extremity of the street, and were again lost in the night. It was a rout.

The barricade was redeemed.

END OF JEAN PROUVAIRE'S RHYME

All flocked round Marius. Courfeyrac sprang to his neck.

"You here!"

"How fortunate!" said Combeferre.

"You came in good time!" said Bossuet.

"Without you I should have been dead!" continued Courfeyrac.

"Without you I'd been gobbled!" added Gavroche.

Marius inquired:

"Where is the chief?"

"You are the chief," said Enjolras.

Marius had all day had a furnace in his brain, now it was a whirlwind. This whirlwind which was within him, affected him as if it were without, and were sweeping him along. It seemed to him that he was already at an immense distance from life. His two luminous months of joy and of love, terminating abruptly upon this frightful precipice, Cosette lost to him, this barricade, M. Mabeuf dying for the republic, himself a chief of insurgents, all these things appeared a monstrous nightmare. He was obliged to make a mental effort to assure himself that all this which surrounded him was real. Marius had lived too little as yet to know that nothing is more imminent than the impossible, and that what we must always foresee is the unforeseen. He was a spectator of his own drama, as of a play which one does not comprehend.

In this mist in which his mind was struggling, he did not recognise Javert, who, bound to his post, had not moved his head during the attack upon the barricade, and who had beheld the revolt going on about him with the resignation of a martyr and the mastery of a judge. Marius did not even perceive him.

Meanwhile the assailants made no movement, they were heard marching and swarming at the end of the street, but they did not venture forward, either that they were awaiting orders, or that before rushing anew upon that impregnable redoubt, they were awaiting reinforcements. The insurgents had posted sentinels, and some who were students in medicine had set about dressing the wounded.

They had thrown the tables out of the wine-shop, with the exception of two reserved for lint and cartridges, and that on which lay Father Mabeuf; they added them to the barricade, and had replaced them in the basement room by the mattresses from the beds of widow Hucheloup, and the servants. Upon these mattresses they had laid the wounded; as for the three poor creatures who lived in Corinth, nobody knew what had become of them. They found them at last, however, hidden in the cellar.

A bitter emotion came to darken their joy over the redeemed barricade.

They called the roll. One of the insurgents was missing. And who? One of the dearest. One of the most valiant, Jean Prouvaire. They sought him among the wounded, he was not there. They sought him among the dead, he was not there. He was evidently a prisoner.

Combeferre said to Enjolras:

"They have our friend; we have their officer. Have you set your heart on the death of this spy?"

"Yes," said Enjolras; "but less than on the life of Jean Prouvaire."

This passed in the basement room near Javert's post.

"Well," replied Combeferre, "I am going to tie my handkerchief to my cane, and go with a flag of truce to offer to give them their man for ours."

"Listen," said Enjolras, laying his hand on Combeferre's arm.

There was a significant clinking of arms at the end of the street.

They heard a manly voice cry:

"Vive la France! Vive l'avenir!"

They recognised Prouvaire's voice.

There was a flash and an explosion.

Silence reigned again.

"They have killed him," exclaimed Combeferre.

Enjolras looked at Javert and said to him:

"Your friends have just shot you."

THE AGONY OF DEATH AFTER THE AGONY OF LIFE

A PECULIARITY of this kind of war is that the attack on the barricades is almost always made in front, and that in general the assailants abstain from turning the positions, whether it be that they dread ambuscades, or that they fear to become entangled in the crooked streets. The whole attention of the insurgents therefore was directed to the great barricade, which was evidently the point still threatened, and where the struggle must infallibly recommence. Marius, however, thought of the little barricade and went to it. It was deserted, and was guarded only by the lamp which flickered between the stones. The little Rue Mondétour, moreover, and the branch streets de la Petite Truanderie and du Cygne, were perfectly quiet.

As Marius, the inspection made, was retiring, he heard his name faintly pronounced in the obscurity:

"Monsieur Marius!"

He shuddered, for he recognised the voice which had called him two hours before, through the grating in the Rue Plumet.

Only this voice now seemed to be but a breath.

He looked about him and saw nobody.

Marius thought he was deceived, and that it was an illusion added by his mind to the extraordinary realities which were thronging about him. He started to leave the retired recess in which the barricade was situated.

"Monsieur Marius!" repeated the voice.

This time he could not doubt, he had heard distinctly; he looked, and saw nothing.

"At your feet," said the voice.

He stooped and saw a form in the shadow, which was dragging itself towards him. It was crawling along the pavement. It was this that had spoken to him.

The lamp enabled him to distinguish a blouse, a pair of torn pantaloons of course velvet, bare feet, and something which resembled a pool of blood. Marius caught a glimpse of a pale face which rose towards him and said to him:

"You do not know me?"

"No."

"Eponine."

Marius bent down quickly. It was indeed that unhappy child. She was dressed as a man.

"How came you here? what are you doing there?"

"I am dying," said she.

There are words and incidents which rouse beings who are crushed. Marius exclaimed, with a start:

"You are wounded! Wait, I will carry you into the room! They will dress your wounds! Is it serious? how shall I take you up so as not to hurt you? Where are you hurt? Help! my God! But what did you come here for?"

And he tried to pass his arm under her to lift her.

In lifting her he touched her hand.

She uttered a feeble cry.

"Have I hurt you?" asked Marius.

"A little."

"But I have only touched your hand."

She raised her hand into Marius' sight, and Marius saw in the centre of that hand a black hole.

"What is the matter with your hand?" said he.

"It is pierced."

"Pierced?"

"Yes."

"By what?"

"By a ball."

"How?"

"Did you see a musket aimed at you?"

"Yes, and a hand which stopped it."

"That was mine."

Marius shuddered.

"What madness! Poor child! But that is not so bad, if that is all, it is nothing, let me carry you to a bed. They will care for you, people don't die from a shot in the hand."

She murmured:

"The ball passed through my hand, but it went out through my back. It is useless to take me from here. I will tell you how you can care for me, better than a surgeon. Sit down by me on that stone."

He obeyed; she laid her head on Marius' knees, and without looking at him, she said:

"Oh! how good it is! How kind he is! That is it! I don't suffer any more!"

She remained a moment in silence, then she turned her head with effort and looked at Marius.

"Do you know, Monsieur Marius? It worried me that you should go into that garden, it was silly, since it was I who had shown you the house, and then indeed I ought surely to have known that a young man like you—"

She stopped, and, leaping over the gloomy transitions which were doubtless in her mind, she added with a heartrending smile:

"You thought me ugly, didn't you?"

She continued:

"See, you are lost! Nobody will get out of the barricade, now. It was I who led you into this, it was! You are going to die, I am sure. And still when I saw him aiming at you, I put up my hand upon the muzzle of the musket. How droll it is! But it was because I wanted to die before you. When I got this ball, I dragged myself here, nobody saw me, nobody picked me up. I waited for you, I said: He will not come then? Oh! if you knew, I bit my blouse, I suffered so much! Now I am well. Do you remember the day when I came into your room, and when I looked at myself in your mirror.

She had a wandering, grave, and touching air. Her torn blouse showed her bare throat. While she was talking she rested her wounded hand upon her breast where there was another hole, from which there came with each pulsation a flow of blood like a jet of wine from an open bung.

Marius gazed upon this unfortunate creature with profound compassion.

"Oh!" she exclaimed suddenly, "it is coming back. I am stifling!"

She seized her blouse and bit it, and her legs writhed upon the pavement.

At this moment the chicken voice of little Gavroche resounded through the barricade. The child had mounted upon a table to load his musket and was gaily singing the song then so popular:

En voyant Lafayette
Le gendarme répète
Sauvons-nous! sauvons-nous! sauvons-nous!

Eponine raised herself up, and listened, then she murmured:

"It is he."

And turning towards Marius:

"My brother is here. He must not see me. He would scold me."

"Your brother?" asked Marius, who thought in the bitterest and most sorrowful depths of his heart, of the duties which his father had bequeathed him towards the Thénardiers, "who is your brother?"

"That little boy."

"The one who is singing?"

"Yes."

Marius started.

"Oh! don't go away!" said she, "it will not be long now!"

She was sitting almost upright, but her voice was very low and broken by hiccoughs. At intervals the death-rattle interrupted her. She approached her face as near as she could to Marius' face. She added with a strange expression:

"Listen, I don't want to deceive you. I have a letter in my pocket for you. Since yesterday. I was told to put it in the post. I kept it. I didn't want it to reach you. But you would not like it of me perhaps when we meet again so soon. We do meet again, don't we? Take your letter."

She grasped Marius' hand convulsively with her wounded hand, but she seemed no longer to feel the pain. She put Marius' hand into the pocket of her blouse. Marius really felt a paper there.

"Take it," said she.

Marius took the letter.

She made a sign of satisfaction and of consent.

"Now for my pains, promise me—"

And she hesitated.

"What?" asked Marius.

"Promise me!"

"I promise you."

"Promise to kiss me on the forehead when I am dead. I shall feel it."

She let her head fall back upon Marius' knees and her eyelids closed. He thought that poor soul had gone. Eponine lay motionless; but just when Marius supposed her for ever asleep, she slowly opened her eyes in which the gloomy deepness of death appeared, and said to him with an accent the sweetness of which already seemed to come from another world:

"And then, do you know, Monsieur Marius, I believe I was a little in love with you."

She essayed to smile again and expired.

GAVROCHE A PROFOUND CALCULATOR OF DISTANCES

Marius kept his promise. He kissed that livid forehead from which oozed an icy sweat. This was not infidelity to Cosette; it was a thoughtful and gentle farewell to an unhappy soul.

He had not taken the letter which Eponine had given him without a thrill. He had felt at once the presence of an event. He was impatient to read it. The heart of man is thus made; the unfortunate child had hardly closed her eyes when Marius thought to unfold this paper. He laid her gently upon the ground, and went away. Something told him that he could not read that letter in sight of this corpse.

He went to a candle in the basement-room. It was a little note, folded and sealed with the elegant care of woman. The address was in a woman's hand, and ran:

"To Monsieur, Monsieur Marius Pontmercy, at M. Courfeyrac's, Rue de la Verrerie, No. 16."

He broke the seal and read:

"My beloved, alas! my father wishes to start immediately. We shall be to-night in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7. In a week we shall be in England. COSETTE. June 4th."

Such was the innocence of this love that Marius did not even know Cosette's handwriting.

What happened may be told in a few words. Eponine had done it all. She had changed rags with the first young rogue who thought it amusing to dress as a woman while Eponine disguised herself as a man. It was she who, in the Champ de Mars, had given Jean Valjean the expressive warning: *Remove.* Jean Valjean returned home, and said to Cosette: *we start to-night, and we are going to the Rue de l'Homme Armé with Toussaint. Next week we shall be in London.* Cosette, prostrated by this unexpected blow, had hastily written two lines to Marius. But how should she get the letter to the post? She did not go out alone, and Toussaint, surprised at such an errand, would surely show the letter to M. Fauchelevent. In this anxiety, Cosette saw, through the grating, Eponine in men's clothes, who was now prowling continually about the garden. Cosette called "this young working-man" and handed him five francs and the letter, saying to him: "carry this letter to its address right away." Eponine put the letter in her pocket. The next day, June 5th, she went to Courfeyrac's to ask for Marius, not to give him the letter, but, a thing which every jealous and loving soul will understand, "to see." There she waited for Marius, or, at least, for Courfeyrac—still to see. When Courfeyrac said to her: we are going to the barricades, an idea flashed across her mind. To throw herself into that death as she would have thrown herself into any other, and to push Marius into it. She followed Courfeyrac, made sure of the post where they were building the barricade; and very sure, since Marius had received no notice, and she had intercepted the letter, that he would at nightfall be at his usual evening rendezvous, she went to the Rue Plumet, waited there for Marius, and sent him, in the name of his friends, an appeal which must, she thought, lead him to the barricade. She counted upon Marius' despair when he should not find Cosette; she was not mistaken. She returned herself to the Rue de la Chanvrerie. We have seen what she did there. She died with that tragic joy of jealous hearts which drag the being they love into death with them, saying: nobody shall have him!

Marius covered Cosette's letter with kisses. She loved him then? He had for a moment the idea that now he need not die. Then he said to himself: "She is going away. Her father takes her to England, and my grandfather refuses to consent to the marriage. Nothing is changed in the fatality." Dreamers, like Marius, have these supreme depressions, and paths hence are chosen in despair. The fatigue of life is insupportable; death is sooner over. Then he thought that there were two duties remaining for him to fulfil: to inform Cosette of his death and to send her a last farewell, and to save from the imminent catastrophe which was approaching, this poor child, Eponine's brother and Thénardier's son.

He had a pocket-book with him; the same that had contained the pages upon which he had written so many thoughts of love for Cosette. He tore out a leaf and wrote with a pencil these few lines:

"Our marriage was impossible. I have asked my grandfather, he has refused; I am without fortune, and you also. I ran to your house, I did not find you, you know the promise that I gave you? I keep it, I die, I love you. When you read this, my soul will be near you, and will smile upon you."

Having nothing to seal this letter with, he merely folded the paper, and wrote upon it this address:

"To Mademoiselle Cosette Fauchelevent, at M. Fauchelevent's, Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7."

The letter folded, he remained a moment in thought, took his pocket-book again, opened it, and wrote these four lines on the first page with the same pencil;

> "My name is Marius Pontmercy. Carry my corpse to my grandfather's, M. Gillenormand, Rue des Filles du Calvaire, No. 6, in the Marais."

He put the book into his coat-pocket, then he called Gavroche. The *gamin,* at the sound of Marius' voice, ran up with his joyous and devoted face:

"Will you do something for me?"

"Anything," said Gavroche. "God of the good God! without you, I should have been cooked, sure."

"You see this letter?"

"Yes."

"Take it. Go out of the barricade immediately (Gavroche, disturbed, began to scratch his ear), and to-morrow morning you will carry it to its address, to Mademoiselle Cosette, at M. Fauchelevent's, Rue de l'Homme Armé No. 7."

The heroic boy answered:

"Ah, well, but in that time they'll take the barricade, and I shan't be here."

"The barricade will not be attacked again before daybreak, according to all appearance, and will not be taken before to-morrow noon."

The new respite which the assailants allowed the barricade was, in fact, prolonged. It was one of those intermissions, frequent in night combats, which are always followed by a redoubled fury.

"Well," said Gavroche, "suppose I go and carry your letter in the morning?"

"It will be too late. The barricade will probably be blockaded; all the streets will be guarded, and you cannot get out. Go, right away!"

Gavroche had nothing more to say; he stood there, undecided, and sadly scratching his ear. Suddenly, with one of his birdlike motions, he took the letter:

"All right," said he.

And he started off on a run by the little Rue Mondétour.

Gavroche had an idea which decided him, but which he did not tell, for fear Marius would make some objection to it.

That idea was this:

"It is hardly midnight, the Rue de l'Homme Armé is not far, I will carry the letter right away, and I shall get back in time."

BOOK XI—THE RUE DE L'HOMME ARMÉ

BLOTTER, BLABBER

On the eve of that same day, June 5th, Jean Valjean, accompanied by Cosette and Toussaint, the devoted domestic, had installed himself in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. A sudden turn of fortune awaited him there.

Cosette had not left the Rue Plumet without an attempt at resistance. For the first time since they had lived together, Cosette's will and Jean Valjean's will had shown themselves distinct, and had been, if not conflicting, at least contradictory. There was no objection to one side and inflexibility on the other. The abrupt advice: *remove,* thrown to Jean Valjean by an unknown hand, had so far alarmed him as to render him absolute. He believed himself tracked out and pursued. Cosette had to yield.

In this departure from the Rue Plumet, which was almost a flight, Jean Valjean carried nothing but the little embalmed valise christened by Cosette the *inseparable.* Full trunks would have required porters, and porters are witnesses. They had a coach come to the door on the Rue Babylone, and they went away.

It was with great difficulty that Toussaint obtained permission to pack up a little linen and clothing and a few toilet articles. Cosette herself carried only her writing-desk and her blotter.

Jean Valjean, to increase the solitude and mystery of this disappearance, had arranged so as not to leave the cottage on the Rue Plumet till the close of the day, which left Cosette time to write her note to Marius. They arrived in the Rue de l'Homme Armé after nightfall.

They went silently to bed.

The lodging in the Rue de l'Homme Armé was situated in a rear court, on the second story, and consisted of two bedrooms, a dining-room, and a kitchen adjoining the dining-room, with a loft where there was a cot-bed which fell to Toussaint. The dining-room was at the same time the ante-chamber, and separated the two bedrooms. The apartments contained all necessary furniture.

We are assured almost as foolishly as we are alarmed; human nature is so constituted. Hardly was Jean Valjean in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, before his anxiety grew less, and by degrees was dissipated. There are quieting spots which act in some sort mechanically upon the mind. Obscure street, peaceful inhabitants. Jean Valjean felt some strange contagion of tranquillity in that lane of the ancient Paris, so narrow that it was barred to carriages by a tranverse joist laid upon two posts, dumb and deaf in the midst of the noisy city, twilight in broad day, and, so to speak, incapable of emotions between its two rows of lofty, century-old houses which are silent like the patriarchs that they are. There is stagnant oblivion in this street. Jean Valjean breathed there. By what means could anybody find him there?

His first care was to place the *inseparable* by his side.

He slept well. Night counsels; we may add: night calms. Next morning he awoke almost cheerful. He thought the dining-room charming, although it was hideous, furnished with an old round table, a low sideboard surmounted by a hanging mirror, a worm-eaten arm-chair, and a few other chairs loaded down with Toussaint's bundles. Through an opening in one of these bundles, Jean Valjean's National Guard uniform could be seen.

As for Cosette, she had Toussaint bring a bowl of soup to her room, and did not make her appearance till evening.

About five o'clock, Toussaint, who was coming and going, very busy with this little removal, set a cold fowl on the dining-room table, which Cosette, out of deference to her father, consented to look at.

This done, Cosette, upon pretext of a severe headache, said good night to Jean Valjean, and shut herself up in her bedroom. Jean Valjean ate a chicken's wing with a good appetite, and, leaning on the tables, clearing his brow little by little, was regaining his sense of security.

While he was making this frugal dinner, he became confusedly aware, on two or three occasions, of the stammering of Toussaint, who said to him: "Monsieur, there is a row; they are fighting in Paris." But, absorbed in a multitude of interior combinations, he paid no attention to it. To tell the truth, he had not heard.

He arose, and began to walk from the window to the door, and from the door to the window, growing calmer and calmer.

While yet walking up and down, with slow steps, his eye suddenly met something strange.

He perceived facing him, in the inclined mirror which hung above the sideboard, and he distinctly read the lines which follow:

"My beloved, alas! my father wishes to start immediately. We shall be to-night in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7. In a week we shall be in England. COSETTE. June 4th."

Jean Valjean stood aghast.

Cosette, on arriving, had laid her blotter on the sideboard before the mirror, and, wholly absorbed in her sorrowful anguish, had forgotten it there, without even noticing that she left it wide open, and open exactly at the page upon which she had dried the lines written by her, and which she had given in charge to the young workman passing through the Rue Plumet. The writing was imprinted upon the blotter.

The mirror reflected the writing.

There resulted what is called in geometry the symmetrical image; so that the writing reversed on the blotter was corrected by the mirror, and presented its original form; and Jean Valjean had beneath his eyes the letter written in the evening by Cosette to Marius.

It was simple and withering.

Jean Valjean went to the mirror. He read over the lines again, but he did not believe it. They produced upon him the effect of an apparition in a flash of lightning. It was hallucination. It was impossible. It was not.

Little by little his perception became more precise; he looked at Cosette's blotter, and the consciousness of the real fact returned to him. He took the blotter and said: "It comes from that." He feverishly examined the fine lines imprinted on the blotter, the reversal of the letters made a fantastic scrawl of them, and he saw no sense in them. Then he said to himself: "But that does not mean anything, there is nothing written there." And he drew a long breath, with an inexpressible sense of relief. Who has not felt these silly joys in moments of horror? The soul does not give itself up to despair until it has exhausted all illusions.

He held the blotter in his hand and gazed at it, stupidly happy, almost laughing at the hallucination of which he had been the dupe. All at once his eyes fell upon the mirror, and he saw the vision again. This time it was not a mirage. The second sight of a vision is a reality, it was palpable, it was the writing restored by the mirror. He understood.

Jean Valjean tottered, let the blotter fall, and sank down into the old armchair by the sideboard, his head drooping, his eye glassy, bewildered. He said to himself that it was clear, and that the light of the world was for ever eclipsed, and that Cosette had written that to somebody. Then he heard his soul, again become terrible, give a sullen roar in the darkness. Go, then, and take from the lion the dog which he has in his cage.

His instinct did not hesitate. He put together certain circumstances, certain dates, certain blushes, and certain pallors of Cosette, and he said to himself: "It is he." The divination of despair is a sort of mysterious bow which never misses its aim. With his first conjecture, he hit Marius. He did not know the name, but he found the man at once. He perceived distinctly, at the bottom of the implacable evocation of memory, the unknown prowler of the Luxembourg, that wretched seeker of amours, that romantic idler, that imbecile, that coward, for it is cowardice to come and make sweet eyes at girls who are beside their father who loves them.

After he had fully determined that that young man was at the bottom of this state of affairs, and that it all came from him, he Jean Valjean, the regenerated man, the man who had laboured so much upon his soul, the man who had made so many efforts to resolve all life, all misery, and all misfortune into love; he looked within himself, and there he saw a spectre, Hatred.

While he was thinking, Toussaint entered. Jean Valjean arose, and asked her:

"In what direction is it? Do you know?"

Toussaint, astonished, could only answer:

"If you please?"

Jean Valjean resumed:

"Didn't you tell me just now that they were fighting?"

"Oh! yes, monsieur," answered Toussaint. "It is over by Saint Merry."

There are some mechanical impulses which come to us, without our knowledge even, from our deepest thoughts. It was doubtless under the influence of an impulse of this kind, and of which he was hardly conscious, that Jean Valjean five minutes afterwards found himself in the street.

He was bare-headed, seated upon the stone block by the door of his house. He seemed to be listening.

The night had come.

THE GAMIN AN ENEMY OF LIGHT

How much time did he pass thus? What were the ebbs and the flows of that tragic meditation? did he straighten up? could he remain bowed? had he been bent so far as to break? could he yet straighten himself, and regain a foothold in his conscience upon something solid? He himself probably could not have told.

The street was empty. A few anxious bourgeois, who were rapidly returning home, hardly perceived him. Every man for himself in times of peril. The lamplighter came as usual to light the lamp which hung exactly opposite the door of No. 7, and went away. Jean Valjean, to one who had examined him in that shadow, would not have seemed a living man. There he was, seated upon the block by his door, immovable as a goblin of ice. There is congelation in despair. The tocsin was heard, and vague stormy sounds were heard. In the midst of all this conclusive clamour of the bell mingled with the émeute, the clock of St. Paul's struck eleven, gravely and without haste, for the tocsin is man; the hour is God. The passing of the hour had no effect upon Jean Valjean; Jean Valjean did not stir. However, almost at that very moment, there was a sharp explosion in the direction of the markets, a second followed, more violent still; it was probable that attack on the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie which we have just seen repulsed by Marius. At this double discharge, the fury of which seemed increased by the stupor of the night, Jean Valjean was startled; he looked up in the direction whence the sound came; then he sank down upon the block, folded his arms, and his head dropped slowly upon his breast.

He resumed his dark dialogue with himself.

Suddenly he raised his eyes, somebody was walking in the street, he heard steps near him, he looked, and, by the light of the lamp, in the direction of the Archives, he perceived a livid face, young and radiant.

Gavroche had just arrived in the Rue de l'Homme Armé.

Gavroche was looking in the air, and appeared to be searching for something. He saw Jean Valjean perfectly, but he took no notice of him.

Gavroche, after looking into the air, looked on the ground; he raised himself on tiptoe and felt of the doors and windows of the ground floors; they were all closed, bolted, and chained. After having found five or six houses barricaded in this way, the *gamin* shrugged his shoulders, and took counsel with himself in these terms:

"Golly!"

Then he began to look into the air again.

Jean Valjean, who, the instant before, in the state of mind in which he was, would not have spoken nor even replied to anybody, felt irresistibly impelled to address a word to this child.

"Small boy," said he, "what is the matter with you?"

"The matter is that I am hungry," answered Gavroche tartly. And he added: "Small yourself."

Jean Valjean felt in his pocket and took out a five-franc piece.

"You are a fine fellow," said Gavroche.

And he put the five-franc piece into one of his pockets.

His confidence increasing, he added:

"Do you belong in the street?"

"Yes; why?"

"Could you show me number seven?"

"What do you want with number seven?"

Here the boy stopped; he feared that he had said too much; he plunged his nails vigorously into his hair, and merely answered:

"Ah! that's it."

An idea flashed across Jean Valjean's mind. Anguish has such lucidities. He said to the child:

"Have you brought the letter I am waiting for?"

"You?" said Gavroche. "You are not a woman."

"The letter is for Mademoiselle Cosette; isn't it?"

"Cosette?" muttered Gavroche, "Yes, I believe it is that funny name."

"Well," resumed Jean Valjean, "I am to deliver the letter to her. Give it to me."

"In that case you must know that I am sent from the barricade?"

"Of course," said Jean Valjean.

Gavroche thrust his hand into another of his pockets, and drew out a folded paper.

Then he gave a military salute.

"Respect for the despatch," said he. "It comes from the provisional government."

"Give it to me," said Jean Valjean.

Gavroche held the paper raised above his head.

"Don't imagine that this is a love-letter. It for a woman, but it is for the people. We men, we are fighting and we respect the sex. We don't do as they do in high life, where there are lions who send love-letters to camels."

"Give it to me."

"The fact is," continued Gavroche, "you look to me like a fine fellow."

"Give it to me quick."

"Take it."

And he handed the paper to Jean Valjean.

"And hurry yourself, Monsieur What's-your-name, for Mamselle What's-her-namess is waiting."

Gavroche was proud of having produced this word.

Jean Valjean asked.

"Is it to Saint Merry that the answer is to be sent?"

"In that case," exclaimed Gavroche, "you would make one of those cakes vulgarly called blunders. That letter comes from the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and I am going back there. Good night, citizen."

This said, Gavroche went away, or rather, resumed his flight like an escaped bird towards the spot whence he came. He replunged into the obscurity as if he made a hole in it, with the rapidity and precision of a projectile; the little Rue de l'Homme Armé again became silent and solitary; in a twinkling, this strange child, who had within him shadow and dream, was buried in the dusk of those rows of black houses, and was lost therein like smoke in the darkness; and one might have thought him dissipated and vanished, if, a few minutes after his disappearance, a loud crashing of glass and the splendid patatras of a lamp falling upon the pavement had not abruptly reawakened the indignant bourgeois. It was Gavroche passing along the Rue du Chaume.

WHILE COSETTE AND TOUSSAINT SLEEP

Jean Valjean went in with Marius' letter.

He groped his way upstairs, pleased with the darkness like an owl which holds his prey, opened and softly closed the door, listened to see if he heard any sound, decided that, according to all appearances, Cosette and Toussaint were asleep, plunged three or four matches into the bottle of the Fumade tinder-box before he could raise a spark, his hand trembled so much; there was theft in what he was about to do. At last, his candle was lighted, he leaned his elbows on the table, unfolded the paper, and read.

In violent emotions, we do not read, we prostrate the paper which we hold, so to speak, we strangle it like a victim, we crush the paper, we bury the nails of our wrath or our delight in it; we run to the end, we leap to the beginning; the attention has a fever; it comprehends by wholesale, almost, the essential: it seizes a point, and all the rest disappears. In Marius' note to Cosette, Jean Valjean saw only these words.

"——I die. When you read this, my soul will be near you."

Before these two lines, he was horribly dazzled; he sat a moment as if crushed by the change of emotion which was wrought within him, he looked at Marius' note with a sort of drunken astonishment; he had before his eyes that splendour, the death of the hated being.

He uttered a hideous cry of inward joy. So, it was finished. The end came sooner than he had dared to hope. The being who encumbered his destiny was disappearing. He was going away of himself, freely, of his own accord. Without any intervention on his, Jean Valjean's part, without any fault of his, "that man" was about to die. Perhaps even he was already dead.—Here his fever began to calculate.—No. He is not dead yet. The letter was evidently written to be read by Cosette in the morning; since those two discharges which were heard between eleven o'clock and midnight, there has been nothing; the barricade will not be seriously attacked till daybreak; but it is all the same, for the moment "that man" meddled with this war, he was lost; he is caught in the net. Jean Valjean felt that he was delivered. He would then find himself once more alone with Cosette. Rivalry ceased; the future recommenced. He had only to keep the note in his pocket. Cosette would never know what had become of "that man." "I have only to let things take their course. That man cannot escape. If he is not dead yet, it is certain that he will die. What happiness!"

All this said within himself, he became gloomy.

Then he went down and waked the porter.

About an hour afterwards, Jean Valjean went out in the full dress of a National Guard, and armed. The porter had easily found in the neighbourhood what was necessary to complete his equipment. He had a loaded musket and a cartridge-box full of cartridges. He went in the direction of the markets.

JEAN VALJEAN

BOOK I—WAR BETWEEN FOUR WALLS

WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE ABYSS BUT TO TALK

The insurgents, under the eye of Enjolras, for Marius no longer looked to anything, turned the night to advantage. The barricade was not only repaired, but made larger. They raised it two feet. Iron bars planted in the paving stones resembled lances in rest. All sorts of rubbish added, and brought from all sides, increased the exterior intricacy. The redoubt was skilfully made over into a wall within and a thicket without.

They rebuilt the stairway of paving-stones, which permitted ascent, as upon a citadel wall.

They put the barricade in order, cleared up the basement room, took the kitchen for a hospital, completed the dressing of the wounds; gathered up the powder scattered over the floor and the tables, cast bullets, made cartridges, scraped lint, distributed the arms of the fallen, cleaned the interior of the redoubt, picked up the fragments, carried away the corpses.

They deposited the dead in a heap in the little Rue Mondétour, of which they were still masters. The pavement was red for a long time at that spot. Among the dead were four National Guards of the banlieue. Enjolras had their uniforms laid aside.

Enjolras advised two hours of sleep. Advice from Enjolras was an order. Still, three or four only profited by it. Feuilly employed these two hours in engraving this inscription on the wall which fronted the wine-shop:

"VIVENT LES PEUPLES!"

These three words, graven in the stone with a nail, were still legible on that wall in 1848.

The three women took advantage of the night's respite to disappear finally, which made the insurgents breathe more freely.

They found refuge in some neighbouring house.

Most of the wounded could and would still fight. There were, upon a straw mattress and some bunches of straw, in the kitchen now become a hospital, five men severely wounded, two of whom were Municipal Guards. The wounds of the Municipal Guards were dressed first.

Nothing now remained in the basement room but Mabeuf, under his black cloth, and Javert bound to the post.

"This is the dead-room," said Enjolras.

In the interior of this room, feebly lighted by a candle, at the very end the funeral table being behind the post like a horizontal bar, a sort of large dim cross was produced by Javert standing, and Mabeuf lying.

The pole of the omnibus, although maimed by the musketry, was still high enough for them to hang a flag upon it.

Enjolras, who had this quality of a chief, always to do as he said, fastened the pierced and bloody coat of the slain old man to this pole.

About two o'clock in the morning, they took a count. There were left thirty-seven of them.

Day was beginning to dawn.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Enjolras had gone to make a reconnaissance. He went out by the little Rue Mondétour, creeping along by the houses.

The insurgents, we must say, were full of hope. The manner in which they had repelled the attack during the night, had led them almost to contempt in advance for the attack at daybreak. They had no more doubt of their success than of their cause. Moreover, help was evidently about to come. They counted on it. With that facility for triumphant prophecy which is a part of the strength of the fighting Frenchmen, they divided into three distinct phases the day which was opening: at six o'clock in the morning a regiment, "which had been laboured with," would come over. At noon, insurrection of all Paris; at sundown, revolution.

They heard the tocsin of Saint Merry, which had not been silent a moment since the evening; a proof that the other barricade, the great one, that of Jeanne, still held out.

All these hopes were communicated from one to another in a sort of cheerful yet terrible whisper, which resembled the buzz of a hive of bees at war.

Enjolras reappeared. He returned from his gloomy eagle's walk in the obscurity without. He listened for a moment to all this joy with folded arms, one hand over his mouth. Then, fresh and rosy in the growing whiteness of the morning, he said:

"The whole army of Paris fights. A third of that army is pressing upon the barricade in which you are. Besides the National Guard, I distinguished the shakos of the Fifth of the line and the colours of the Sixth Legion. You will be attacked in an hour. As for the people, they were boiling yesterday, but this morning they do not stir. Nothing to expect, nothing to hope. No more from a Faubourg than from a regiment. You are abandoned."

These words fell upon the buzzing of the groups, and wrought the effect which the first drops of the tempest produce upon the swarm. All were dumb. There was a moment of inexpressible silence, when you might have heard the flight of death.

This moment was short.

A voice, from the most obscure depths of the groups, cried to Enjolras:

"So be it. Let us make the barricade twenty feet high, and let us all stand by it. Citizens, let us offer the protest of corpses. Let us show that, if the people abandon the republicans, the republicans do not abandon the people."

These words relieved the minds of all from the painful cloud of personal anxieties. They were greeted by an enthusiastic acclamation.

The name of the man who thus spoke was never known; it was some obscure blouse-wearer, an unknown, a forgotten man, a passing hero, that great anonymous always found in human crises and in social births, who, at the proper instant, speaks the decisive word supremely, and who vanishes into the darkness after having for a moment represented, in the light of a flash, the people and God.

This inexorable resolution so filled the air of June 6, 1832, that, almost at the same hour, in the barricade of Saint Merry, the insurgents raised this shout which was proved on the trial, and which has become historical: "Let them come to our aid or let them not come, what matter? Let us die here to the last man."

As we see, the two barricades, although essentially isolated, communicated.

FIVE LESS, ONE MORE

After the man of the people, who decreed "the protest of corpses," had spoken and given the formula of the common soul, from all lips arose a strangely satisfied and terrible cry, funereal in meaning and triumphant in tone:

"Long live death! Let us all stay!"

"Why all?" said Enjolras.

"All! all!"

Enjolras resumed:

"The position is good, the barricade is fine. Thirty men are enough. Why sacrifice forty?"

They replied:

"Because nobody wants to go away."

"Citizens," cried Enjolras, and there was in his voice almost an angry tremor, "the republic is not rich enough in men to incur useless expenditures. Vainglory is a squandering. If it is the duty of some to go away, that duty should be performed as well as any other."

Enjolras, the man of principle, had over his co-religionists that sort of omnipotence which emanates from the absolute. Still, notwithstanding this omnipotence, there was a murmur.

Chief to his finger-ends, Enjolras, seeing that they murmured, insisted. He resumed haughtily:

"Let those who fear to be one of but thirty, say so."

The murmurs redoubled.

"Besides," observed a voice from one of the groups, "to go away is easily said. The barricade is hemmed in."

"Not towards the markets," said Enjolras. "The Rue Mondétour is open, and by the Rue des Prêcheurs one can reach the Marché des Innocents."

"And there," put in another voice from the group, "he will be taken. He will fall upon some grand guard of the line or the banlieue.

They will see a man going by in a cap and blouse. 'Where do you come from, fellow? you belong to the barricade, don't you?' And they look at your hands. You smell of powder. Shot."

Enjolras, without answering, touched Combeferre's shoulder, and they both went into the basement room.

They came back a moment afterwards. Enjolras held out in his hands the four uniforms which he had reserved. Combeferre followed him, bringing the cross belts and shakos.

"With this uniform," said Enjolras, "you can mingle with the ranks and escape. Here are enough for four."

And he threw the four uniforms upon the unpaved ground.

No wavering in the stoical auditory. Combeferre spoke:

"Come," said he, "we must have a little pity. Do you know what the question is now? It is a question of women. Let us see. Are there any wives, yes or no? are there any children, yes or no? Are there, yes or no, any mothers, who rock the cradle with their foot and who have heaps of little ones about them? Let him among you who has never seen the breast of a nursing-woman hold up his hand. Ah! you wish to die, I wish it also, I, who am speaking to you, but I do not wish to feel the ghosts of women wringing their hands about me. Die, so be it, but do not make others die. Suicides like those which will be accomplished here are sublime; but suicide is strict, and can have no extension; and as soon as it touches those next you, the name of suicide is murder. Think of the little flaxen heads, and think of the white hairs.

All bowed their heads with a gloomy air.

Strange contradictions of the human heart in its most sublime moments! Combeferre, who spoke thus, was not an orphan. He remembered the mothers of others, and he forgot his own. He was going to be killed. He was "selfish."

Marius, fasting, feverish, successively driven from every hope, stranded upon grief, most dismal of shipwrecks, saturated with violent emotions and feeling the end approach, was sinking deeper and deeper into that visionary stupor which always precedes the fatal hour when voluntarily accepted.

He raised his voice:

"Enjolras and Combeferre are right," said he; "no useless sacrifice. I add my voice to theirs, and we must hasten. Combeferre has given the criteria. There are among you some who have families, mothers, sisters, wives, children. Let those leave the ranks."

Nobody stirred.

"Married men and supports of families, out of the ranks!" repeated Marius.

His authority was great. Enjolras was indeed the chief of the barricade, but Marius was its saviour.

"I order it," cried Enjolras.

"I beseech you," said Marius.

Then, roused by the words of Combeferre, shaken by the order of Enjolras, moved by the prayer of Marius, those heroic men began to inform against each other. "That is true," said a young man to a middle-aged man. "You are the father of a family. Go away." "It is you rather," answered the man, "you have two sisters whom you support." And an unparalleled conflict broke out. It was as to which should not allow himself to be laid at the door of the tomb.

"Make haste," said Courfeyrac, "in a quarter of an hour it will be too late."

"Citizens," continued Enjolras, "this is the republic, and universal suffrage reigns. Designate yourselves those who ought to go."

They obeyed. In a few minutes five were unanimously designated and left the ranks.

"There are five!" exclaimed Marius.

There were only four uniforms.

"Well," resumed the five, "one must stay."

And it was who should stay, and who should find reasons why the others should not stay. The generous quarrel recommenced.

"You, you have a wife who loves you." "As for you, you have your old mother." "You have neither father nor mother, what will become of your three little brothers?" "You are the father of five children." "You have a right to live, you are seventeen, it is too soon."

These grand revolutionary barricades were rendezvous of heroisms. The improbable there was natural. These men were not astonished at each other.

"Be quick," repeated Courfeyrac.

Somebody cried out from the group, to Marius:

"Designate yourself, which must stay."

"Yes," said the five, "choose. We will obey you."

Marius now believed no emotion possible. Still at this idea: to select a man for death, all his blood flowed back towards his heart. He would have turned pale if he could have been paler.

He advanced towards the five, who smiled upon him, and each, his eye full of that grand flame which we see in the depth of history over the Thermopylæs, cried to him:

"Me! me! me!"

And Marius, in a stupor, counted them; there were still five! Then his eyes fell upon the four uniforms.

At this moment a fifth uniform dropped, as if from heaven, upon the four others.

The fifth man was saved.

Marius raised his eyes and saw M. Fauchelevent.

Jean Valjean had just entered the barricade.

Whether by information obtained, or by instinct, or by chance, he came by the little Rue Mondétour. Thanks to his National Guard dress, he had passed easily.

MARIUS HAGGARD, JAVERT LACONIC

The five men designated went out of the barricade by the little Rue Mondétour; they resembled National Guards perfectly; one of them went away weeping. Before starting, they embraced those who remained.

When the five men sent away into life had gone, Enjolras thought of the one condemned to death. He went into the basement room. Javert, tied to the pillar, was thinking.

"Do you need anything?" Enjolras asked him.

Javert answered:

"When shall you kill me?"

"Wait. We need all our cartridges at present."

"Then, give me a drink," said Javert.

Enjolras presented him with a glass of water himself, and, as Javert was bound, he helped him to drink.

"Is that all?" resumed Enjolras.

"I am uncomfortable at this post," answered Javert. "It was not affectionate to leave me here. Tie me as you please, but you can surely lay me on a table. Like the other."

And with a motion of his head he indicated M. Mabeuf's body.

There was, it will be remembered, at the back of the room, a long wide table, upon which they had cast balls and made cartridges. All the cartridges being made and all the powder used up, this table was free.

At Enjolras' order, four insurgents untied Javert from the post. While they were untying him, a fifth held a bayonet to his breast. They left his hands tied behind his back, they put a small yet strong whipcord about his feet, which permitted him to take fifteen-inch steps like those who are mounting the scaffold, and they made him walk to the table at the back of the room, on which they extended him, tightly bound by the middle of his body.

For greater security, by means of a rope fixed to his neck, they added to the system of bonds which rendered all escape impossible, that species of ligature, called in the prisons a martingale, which, starting from the back of the neck, divides over the stomach, and is fastened to the hands after passing between the legs.

While they were binding Javert, a man, on the threshold of the door, gazed at him with singular attention. The shade which this man produced made Javert turn his head. He raised his eyes and recognised Jean Valjean. He did not even start, he haughtily dropped his eyelids, and merely said: "It is very natural."

THE SITUATION GROWS SERIOUS

It was growing light rapidly. But not a window was opened, not a door stood ajar; it was the dawn, not the hour of awakening.

As on the evening before, the attention of all was turned, and we might almost say threw its weight upon the end of the street, now lighted and visible.

They had not long to wait. Activity distinctly recommenced in the direction Saint Leu, but it did not resemble the movement of the first attack. A rattle of chains, the menacing jolt of a mass, a click-ing of brass bounding over the pavement, a sort of solemn uproar, announced that an ominous body of iron was approaching. There was a shudder in the midst of those peaceful old streets, cut through and built up for the fruitful circulation of interests and ideas, and which were not made for the monstrous rumbling of the wheels of war.

The stare of all the combatants upon the extremity of the street became wild.

A piece of artillery appeared.

The gunners pushed forward the piece; it was all ready to be loaded; the fore wheels had been removed; two supported the carriage, four were at the wheels, others followed with the caisson. The smoke of the burning match was seen.

"Fire!" cried Enjolras.

The whole barricade flashed fire, the explosion was terrible; an avalanche of smoke covered and effaced the gun and the men; in a few seconds the cloud dissipated, and the cannon and the men reappeared; those in charge of the piece placed it in position in front of the barricade, slowly, correctly, and without haste. Not a man had been touched. Then the gunner, bearing his weight on the breech, to elevate the range, began to point the cannon with the gravity of an astronomer adjusting a telescope.

"Bravo for the gunners!" cried Bossuet.

And the whole barricade clapped hands.

A moment afterwards, placed squarely in the very middle of the street, astride of the gutter, the gun was in battery. A formidable mouth was opened upon the barricade.

"Come, be lively!" said Courfeyrac. "There is the brute. After the fillip, the knock-down. The army stretches out its big paw to us. The barricade is going to be seriously shaken. The musketry feels, the artillery takes."

"Reload arms," said Enjolras.

How was the facing of the barricade going to behave under fire? would the shot make a breach? That was the question. While the insurgents were reloading their muskets, the gunners loaded the cannon.

There was intense anxiety in the redoubt.

The gun went off; the detonation burst upon them.

"Present!" cried a cheerful voice.

And at the same time with the ball, Gavroche tumbled into the barricade.

He came by the way of the Rue du Cygne, and he had nimbly clambered over the minor barricade, which fronted upon the labyrinth of the Petite Truanderie.

Gavroche produced more effect in the barricade than the ball.

The ball lost itself in the jumble of the rubbish. At the very utmost it broke a wheel of the omnibus, and finished the old Anceau cart. Seeing which, the barricade began to laugh.

"Proceed," cried Bossuet to the gunners.

THE GUNNERS PRODUCE A SERIOUS IMPRESSION

Meanwhile Enjolras, on his battlement, was watching, listening with intense attention.

The assailants, dissatisfied doubtless with the effect of their fire, had not repeated it.

A company of infantry of the line had come in and occupied the extremity of the street, in the rear of the gun. The soldiers tore up the pavement, and with the stones constructed a little low wall, a sort of breastwork, which was hardly more than eighteen inches high, and which fronted the barricade. At the corner on the left of this breastwork, they saw at the head of the column of a battalion of the banlieue massed in the Rue St. Denis.

Enjolras, on the watch, thought he distinguished the peculiar sound which is made when canisters of grape are taken from the caisson, and he saw the gunner change the aim and incline the piece slightly to the left. Then the cannoneers began to load. The gunner seized the linstock himself and brought it near the touch-hole.

"Heads down, keep close to the wall!" cried Enjolras, "and all on your knees along the barricade!"

The insurgents, who were scattered in front of the wine-shop, and who had left their posts of combat on Gavroche's arrival, rushed pell-mell towards the barricade; but before Enjolras' order was executed, the discharge took place with the fearful rattle of grape-shot. It was so in fact.

The charge was directed at the opening of the redoubt, it ricocheted upon the wall, and this terrible ricochet killed two men and wounded three.

If that continued, the barricade was no longer tenable. It was not proof against grape.

There was a sound of consternation.

"Let us prevent the second shot, at any rate," said Enjolras.

And, lowering his carbine, he aimed at the gunner, who, at that moment, bending over the breech of the gun, was correcting and finally adjusting the aim.

This gunner was a fine-looking sergeant of artillery, quite young, of fair complexion, with a very mild face, and the intelligent air peculiar to that predestined and formidable arm which, by perfecting itself in horror, must end in killing war.

Combeferre, standing near Enjolras, looked at this young man.

"What a pity!" said Combeferre. "What a hideous thing these butcheries are! Come, when there are no more kings, there will be no more war. Enjolras, you are aiming at that sergeant, you are not looking at him. Just think that he is a charming young man; he is intrepid; you see that he is a thinker; these young artillery-men are well educated; he has a father, a mother, a family; he is in love, probably; he is at most twenty-five years old; he might be your brother."

"He is," said Enjolras.

"Yes," said Combeferre, "and mine also. Well, don't let us kill him."

"Let me alone. We must do what we must."

And a tear rolled slowly down Enjolras' marble cheek.

At the same time he pressed the trigger of his carbine. The flash leaped forth. The artillery-man turned twice round, his arms stretched out before him, and his head raised as if to drink the air, then he fell over on his side upon the gun, and lay there motionless. His back could be seen, from the centre of which a stream of blood gushed upwards. The ball had entered his breast and passed through his body. He was dead.

It was necessary to carry him away and to replace him. It was indeed some minutes gained.

USE OF THAT OLD POACHER SKILL

There was confusion in the counsel of the barricade. The gun was about to be fired again. They could not hold out a quarter of an hour in that storm of grape. It was absolutely necessary to deaden the blows.

Enjolras threw out his command:

"We must put a mattress there."

"We have none," said Combeferre, "the wounded are on them."

Jean Valjean, seated apart on a block, at the corner of the wine-shop, his musket between his knees, had, up to this moment, taken no part in what was going on. He seemed not to hear the combatants about him say: "There is a musket which is doing nothing."

At the order given by Enjolras, he got up.

On the arrival of the company in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, an old woman, foreseeing bullets, had put her mattress before her window. This window, a garret window, was on the roof of a house of six stories standing a little outside of the barricade. The mattress, placed crosswise, rested at the bottom upon two clothes-poles, and was sustained above by two ropes which, in the distance, seemed like threads, and which were fastened to nails driven into the window casing. These two ropes could be seen distinctly against the sky like hairs.

"Can somebody lend me a double-barrelled carbine?" said Jean Valjean.

Enjolras, who had just reloaded his, handed it to him.

Jean Valjean aimed at the window and fired.

One of the two ropes of the mattress was cut.

The mattress now hung only by one thread.

Jean Valjean fired the second barrel. The second rope struck the glass of the window. The mattress slid down between the two poles and fell into the street.

The barricade applauded.

All cried:

"There is a mattress."

"Yes," said Combeferre, "but who will go after it?"

The mattress had, in fact, fallen outside of the barricade, between the besieged and the besiegers. Now, the death of the gunner having exasperated the troops, the soldiers, for some moments, had been lying on their faces behind the line of paving-stones which they had raised, and, to make up for the compulsory silence of the gun, which was quiet while its service was being reorganised, they had opened fire on the barricade. The insurgents made no response to this musketry, to spare their ammunition. The fusilade was broken against the barricade; but the street, which it filled with balls, was terrible.

Jean Valjean went out at the opening, entered the street, passed through the storm of balls, went to the mattress, picked it up, put it on his back, and returned to the barricade.

He put the mattress into the opening himself. He fixed it against the wall in such a way that the artillerymen did not see it.

This done, they awaited the charge of grape.

They had not long to wait.

The cannon vomited its package of shot with a roar. But there was no ricochet. The grape miscarried upon the mattress. The desired effect was obtained. The barricade was preserved.

"Citizen," said Enjolras to Jean Valjean, "the republic thanks you."

Bossuet admired and laughed. He exclaimed:

"It is immoral that a mattress should have so much power. Triumph of that which yields over that which thunders. But it is all the same; glory to the mattress which nullifies a cannon."

GAVROCHE OUTSIDE

Courfeyrac suddenly perceived somebody at the foot of the barricade, outside in the street, under the balls.

Gavroche had taken a basket from the wine-shop, had gone out by the opening, and was quietly occupied in emptying into his basket the full cartridge-boxes of the National Guards who had been killed on the slope of the redoubt.

"What are you doing there?" said Courfeyrac.

Gavroche cocked up his nose.

"Citizen, I am filling my basket."

"Why, don't you see the grape?"

Gavroche answered:

"Well, it rains. What then?"

Courfeyrac cried:

"Come back!"

"Directly," said Gavroche.

And with a bound, he sprang into the street.

Some twenty dead lay scattered along the whole length of the street on the pavement. Twenty cartridge-boxes for Gavroche, a supply of cartridges for the barricade.

The smoke in the street was like a fog.

Under the folds of this veil of smoke, and thanks to his small size, he could advance far into the street without being seen. He emptied the first seven or eight cartridge-boxes without much danger.

He crawled on his belly, ran on his hands and feet, took his basket in his teeth, twisted, glided, writhed, wormed his way from one body to another, and emptied a cartridge-box as a monkey opens a nut.

From the barricade, of which he was still within hearing, they dared not call to him to return, for fear of attracting attention to him.

On one corpse, that of a corporal, he found a powder-flask.

"In case of thirst," said he as he put it into his pocket.

By successive advances, he reached a point where the fog from the firing became transparent.

So that the sharp-shooters of the line drawn up and on the alert behind their wall of paving-stones, and the sharp-shooters of the banlieue massed at the corner of the street, suddenly discovered something moving in the smoke.

Just as Gavroche was relieving a sergeant who lay near a stone-block of his cartridges, a ball struck the body.

"The deuce!" said Gavroche. "So they are killing my dead for me."

A second ball splintered the pavement beside him. A third upset his basket.

Gavroche looked and saw that it came from the banlieue.

Then he picked up his basket, put into it the cartridge which had fallen out, without losing a single one, and, advancing towards the fusilade, began to empty another cartridge-box. There a fourth ball just missed him again.

This continued thus for some time.

The sight was appalling and fascinating. Gavroche, fired at, mocked the firing. He appeared to be very much amused. It was the sparrow pecking at the hunters. They aimed at him incessantly, they always missed him. The National Guards and the soldiers laughed as they aimed at him. He lay down, then rose up, hid himself in a doorway, then sprang out, disappeared, reappeared, escaped, returned, retorted upon the volleys by wry faces, and meanwhile pillaged cartridges, emptied cartridge-boxes, and filled his basket. The insurgents, breathless with anxiety, followed him with their eyes. The barricade was trembling; he was singing. It was not a child; it was not a man; it was a strange fairy *gamin*. One would have said the invulnerable dwarf of the melée. The bullets ran after him, he was more nimble than they. He was playing an indescribably terrible game of hide-and-seek with death; every time the flatnosed face of the spectre approached, the *gamin* snapped his fingers.

One bullet, however, better aimed or more treacherous than the others, reached the Will-o'-the-wisp child. They saw Gavroche totter, then he fell. The whole barricade gave a cry; but there was an Antæus in this pigmy; for the *gamin* to touch the pavement is like the giant touching the earth; Gavroche had fallen only to rise again; he sat up, a long stream of blood rolled down his face, he raised both arms in air, looked in the direction whence the shot came, and began to sing.

He did not finish. A second ball from the same marksman cut him short. This time he fell with his face upon the pavement, and did not stir again. That little great soul had taken flight.

THE VULTURE BECOMES PREY

We must dwell upon a psychological fact, peculiar to barricades. Nothing which characterises this surprising war of the streets should be omitted.

There is an apocalypse in civil war, all the mists of the unknown are mingled with these savage flames, revolutions are sphinxes, and he who has passed through a barricade, believes he has passed through a dream.

What is felt in those places, as we shall see in what follows. is more and is less than life. Once out of the barricade, a man no longer knows what he has seen in it. He was terrible, he does not know it. He was surrounded by combating ideas which had human faces; he had his head in the light of the future. There were corpses lying and phantoms standing. The hours were colossal, and seemed hours of eternity. He lived in death. Shadows passed by. What were they? He saw hands on which there was blood; it was an appalling uproar, it was also a hideous silence; there were open mouths which shouted, and other open mouths which held their peace; he was in the smoke, in the night, perhaps. He thinks he has touched the ominous ooze of the unknown depths; he sees something red in his nails. He remembers nothing more. Thus passed the hours on this fatal morning.

Suddenly between two discharges they heard the distant sound of a clock striking.

"It is noon," said Combeferre.

The twelve strokes had not sounded when Enjolras sprang to his feet, and flung down from the top of the barricade this thundering shout:

"Carry some paving stones into the house. Fortify the windows with them. Half the men to the muskets, the other half to the stones. Not a minute to lose."

A platoon of sappers, their axes on their shoulders, had just appeared in order of battle at the end of the street.

This could only be the head of a column; and of what column? The column of attack, evidently. The sappers, whose duty it is to demolish the barricade, must always precede the soldiers whose duty it is to scale it.

They were evidently close upon the moment which Monsieur de Clermont Tonnerre, in 1822, called "the twist of the necklace."

Enjolras' order was executed with the correct haste peculiar to ships and barricades, the only places of combat whence escape is impossible. In less than a minute, two-thirds of the paving-stones which Enjolras had had piled up at the door of the Corinth were carried up to the first story and to the garret; and before a second minute had elapsed, these stones, artistically laid one upon another, walled up half the height of the window on the first story and the dormer windows of the attic. A few openings, carefully arranged by Feuilly, chief builder, allowed musket barrels to pass through. This armament of the windows could be performed the more easily since the grape had ceased. The two pieces were now firing balls upon the centre of the wall, in order to make a hole, and if it were possible, a breach for the assult.

When the paving-stones, destined for the last defence, were in position, Enjolras had them carry up to the first story the bottles which he had placed under the table where Mabeuf was.

"Who will drink that?" Bossuet asked him.

"They," answered Enjolras.

Then they barricaded the basement window, and they held in readiness the iron cross-pieces which served to bar the door of the wine-shop on the inside at night.

The fortress was complete. The barricade was the rampart, the wine-shop was the donjon.

With the paving-stones which remained, they closed up the opening beside the barricade.

As the defenders of a barricade are always obliged to husband their ammunition, and as the besiegers know it, the besiegers perfect their arrangements with a sort of provoking leisure, expose themselves to fire before the time, but in appearance more in reality, and take their ease. The preparations for attack are always made with a certain methodical slowness, after which the thunderbolt.

This slowness allowed Enjolras to look over the whole, and to perfect the whole. He felt that since such men were to die, their death should be a masterpiece.

He said to Marius: "We are the two chiefs; I will give the last orders within. You stay outside and watch."

Marius posted himself for observation upon the crest of the barricade.

Enjolras had the door of the kitchen, which, we remember, was the hospital, nailed up.

"No spattering on the wounded," said he.

He gave his last instructions in the basement-room in a quick but deep and calm voice; Feuilly listened, and answered in the name of all.

"First story, hold your axes ready to cut the staircase. Have you them?"

"Yes," said Feuilly.

"How many?"

"Two axes and a pole-ax."

"Very well. There are twenty-six effective men left."

"How many muskets are there?"

"Thirty-four."

"Eight too many. Keep these eight muskets loaded like the rest, and at hand. Swords and pistols in your belts. Twenty men to the barricade. Six in ambush at the dormer windows and at the window on the first story to fire upon the assailants through the loopholes in the paving stones. Let there be no useless labourer here. Immediately, when the drum beats the charge, let the twenty from below rush to the barricade. The first there will get the best places."

These dispositions made, he turned towards Javert, and said to him:

"I won't forget you."

And laying a pistol on the table, he added:

"The last man to leave this room will blow out the spy's brains!"

"No, do not leave this corpse with ours. You can climb over the little barricade on the Rue Mondétour. It is only four feet high. The man is well tied. You will take him there, and execute him there."

There was one man, at that moment, who was more impassable than Enjolras; it was Javert.

Here Jean Valjean appeared.

He was in the throng of insurgents. He stepped forward, and said to Enjolras:

"You are the commander?"

"Yes."

"You thanked me just now."

"In the name of the republic. The barricade has two saviours, Monsieur Pontmercy and you."

"Do you think that I deserve a reward?"

"Certainly."

"Well, I ask one."

"What?"

"To blow out that man's brains myself."

Javert raised his head, saw Jean Valjean, made an imperceptible movement, and said:

"That is appropriate."

As for Enjolras, he had begun to reload his carbine; he cast his eyes about him:

"No objection."

And turning towards Jean Valjean: "Take the spy."

Jean Valjean, in fact, took possession of Javert by sitting down on the end of the table. He caught up the pistol, and a slight click announced that he had cocked it.

Almost at the same moment, they heard a flourish of trumpets.

"Come on!" cried Marius, from the top of the barricade.

Javert began to laugh with that noiseless laugh which was peculiar to him, and, looking fixedly upon the insurgents, said to them:

"Your health is hardly better than mine."

"All outside?" cried Enjolras.

The insurgents sprang forward in a tumult, and, as they went out, they received in the back, allow us the expression, this speech from Javert:

"Farewell till immediately!"

JEAN VALJEAN TAKES HIS REVENGE

When Jean Valjean was alone with Javert, he untied the rope that held the prisoner by the middle of the body, the knot of which was under the table. Then he motioned to him to get up.

Javert obeyed, with that undefinable smile into which the supremacy of enchained authority is condensed.

Jean Valjean took Javert by the martingale as you would take a beast of burden by a strap, and, drawing him after him, went out of the wine-shop slowly, for Javert, with his legs fettered, could take only very short steps.

Jean Valjean had the pistol in his hand.

They crossed thus the interior trapezium of the barricade.

The insurgents, intent upon the imminent attack, were looking the other way.

Marius, alone, placed towards the left extremity of the wall, saw them pass. This group of the victim and the executioner borrowed a light from the sepulchral gleam which he had in his soul.

Jean Valjean, with some difficulty, bound as Javert was, but without letting go of him for a single instant, made him scale the little intrenchment on the Rue Mondétour.

When they had climbed over this wall, they found themselves alone in the little street. Nobody saw them now. The corner of the house hid them from the insurgents. The corpses carried out from the barricades made a terrible mound a few steps off.

Jean Valjean put the pistol under his arm, and fixed upon Javert a look which had no need of words to say: "Javert, it is I."

Javert answered:

"Take your revenge."

Jean Valjean took a knife out of his pocket, and opened it.

"A *surin!*" exclaimed Javert. "You are right. That suits you better."

Jean Valjean cut the martingale which Javert had about his neck, then he cut the ropes which he had on his wrists, then, stooping down, he cut the cord which he had on his feet; and, rising, he said to him:

"You are free."

Javert was not easily astonished. Still, complete master as he was of himself, he could not escape an emotion. He stood aghast and motionless.

Jean Valjean continued:

"I don't expect to leave this place. Still, if by chance I should, I live, under the name of Fauchelevent, in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, Number Seven."

Javert had the scowl of a tiger half opening a corner of his mouth, and he muttered between his teeth:

"Take care."

"Go," said Jean Valjean.

Javert resumed:

"You said Fauchelevent, Rue de l'Homme Armé?"

"Number Seven."

Javert repeated in an undertone: "Number seven." He buttoned his coat, restored the military stiffness between his shoulders, turned half around, folded his arms, supporting his chin with one hand, and walked off in the direction of the markets. Jean Valjean followed him with his eyes. After a few steps, Javert turned back, and cried to Jean Valjean:

"You annoy me. Kill me rather."

Javert did not notice that his tone was more respectful towards Jean Valjean.

"Go away," said Jean Valjean.

Javert receded with slow steps. A moment afterwards, he turned the corner of the Rue des Prêcheurs.

When Javert was gone, Jean Valjean fired the pistol in the air.

Then he re-entered the barricade and said: "It is done."

Meanwhile what had taken place is this:

Marius, busy rather with the street than the wine-shop, had not until then looked attentively at the spy who was bound in the dusky rear of the basement-room.

When he saw him in broad day clambering over the barricade on his way to die, he recognised him. A sudden reminiscence came into his mind. He remembered the inspector of the Rue de Pontoise, and the two pistols which he had handed him and which he had used, he, Marius, in this very barricade; and not only did he recollect the face, but he recalled the name.

This reminiscence, however, was misty and indistinct, like all his ideas. It was an affirmation which he made to himself, it was a question which he put: "Is not this that inspector of police who told me his name was Javert?"

Perhaps there was still time to interfere for this man? But he must know if it were indeed that Javert.

Marius called to Enjolras, who had just taken his place at the other end of the barricade.

"Enjolras!"

"What?"

"What is that man's name?"

"Who?"

"The police officer. Do you know his name?"

"Of course. He told us."

"What is his name?"

"Javert."

Marius sprang up.

At that moment they heard the pistol-shot.

Jean Valjean appeared and cried: "It is done."

A dreary chill passed through the heart of Marius.

THE HEROES

Suddenly the drum beat the charge.

Enjolras was at one end of the barricade, and Marius at the other. Enjolras, who carried the whole barricade in his head, reserved and sheltered himself; three soldiers fell one after the other under his battlement, without even having perceived him; Marius fought without shelter. He took no aim. He stood with more than half his body above the summit of the redoubt. There is no wilder prodigal than a miser who takes the bit in his teeth; there is no man more fearful in action than a dreamer. Marius was terrible and pensive. He was in the battle as in a dream. One would have said a phantom firing a musket.

The assailants had the numbers; the insurgents the position. They were on the top of a wall, and they shot down the soldiers at the muzzles of their muskets, as they stumbled over the dead and wounded and became entangled in the escarpment. This barricade, built as it was, and admirably supported, was really one of those positions in which a handful of men hold a legion in check. Still, constantly reinforced and increasing under the shower of balls, the attacking column inexorably approached, and now, little by little, step by step, but with certainty, the army hugged the barricade as the screw hugs the wine-press.

There was assault after assault. The horror continued to increase.

They fought breast to breast, foot to foot, with pistols, with sabres, with fists, at a distance, close at hand, from above, from below, from everywhere, from the roofs of the house, from the windows of the wine-shop, from the gratings of the cellars into which some had slipped. They were one against sixty. The façade of Corinth, half demolished, was hideous. The window, riddled with grape, had lost glass and sash, and was now nothing but a shapeless hole, confusedly blocked with paving-stones. Bossuet was killed; Feuilly was killed; Courfeyrac was killed; Joly was killed; Combeferre, pierced by three bayonet-thrusts in the breast, just as he was lifting a wounded soldier, had only time to look to heaven, and expired.

Marius, still fighting, was so hacked with wounds, particularly about his head, that the countenance was lost in blood, and you would have said that he had his face covered with a red handkerchief.

Enjolras alone was untouched. When his weapon failed, he reached his hand to right or left, and an insurgent put whatever weapon he could in his grasp. Of four swords, one more than Francis I. at Marignan, he now had but one stump remaining.

FOOT TO FOOT

When there were none of the chiefs alive save Enjolras and Marius, who were at the extremities of the barricade, the centre, which Courfeyrac, Joly, Bossuet, Feuilly, and Combeferre had so long sustained, gave way. The artillery, without making a practicable breach, had deeply indented the centre of the redoubt; there, the summit of the wall had disappeared under the balls, and had tumbled down; and the rubbish which had fallen, sometimes on the interior, sometimes on the exterior, had finally made, as it was heaped up, on either side of the wall, a kind of talus, both on the inside, and on the outside. The exterior talus offered an inclined plane for attack.

A final assault was now attempted, and this assault succeeded. The mass bristling with bayonets and hurled at a double-quick step, came on irresistible, and the dense battle-front of the attacking column appeared in the smoke at the top of the escarpment. This time, it was finished. The group of insurgents who defended the centre fell back pell-mell.

Then grim love of life was roused in some. Covered by the aim of that forest of muskets, several were now unwilling to die. This is a moment when the instinct of self-preservation raises a howl, and the animal reappears in the man. They were pushed back to the high six-story house which formed the rear of the redoubt. This house might be safety. This house was barricaded, and, as it were, walled in from top to bottom. Before the troops of the line would be in the interior of the redoubt, there was time for a door to open and shut, a flash was enough for that, and the door of this house, suddenly half opened and closed again immediately, to these despairing men was life. In the rear of this house, there were streets, possible flight, space. They began to strike this door with the butts of their muskets, and with kicks, calling, shouting, begging, wringing their hands. Nobody opened. From the window on the third story, the death's head looked at them.

But Enjolras and Marius, with seven or eight who had been rallied about them, sprang forward and protected them. Enjolras cried to the soldiers: "Keep back!" and an officer not obeying, Enjolras killed the officer. He was now in the little interior court of the redoubt, with his back to the house of Corinth, his sword in one hand, his carbine in the other, keeping the door of the wine-shop open while he barred it against the assailants. He cried to the despairing: "There is but one door open. This one." And, covering them with his body, alone facing a battalion, he made them pass in behind him. All rushed in. Enjolras executing with his carbine, which he now used as a cane, what cudgel-players call *la rose couverte,* beat down the bayonets about him and before him, and entered last of all; and for an instant it was horrible, the soldiers struggling to get in, the insurgents to close the door. The door was closed with such violence that, in shutting into its frame, it exposed, cut off, and adhering to the casement, the thumb and fingers of a soldier who had caught hold of it.

Marius remained without. A ball had broken his shoulder-blade; he felt that he was fainting, and that he was falling. At that moment, his eyes already closed, he experienced the shock of a vigorous hand seizing him, and his fainting fit, in which he lost consciousness, left him hardly time for this thought, mingled with the last memory of Cosette: "I am taken prisoner. I shall be shot."

PRISONER

Marius was in fact a prisoner. Prisoner of Jean Valjean.

The hand which had seized him from behind at the moment he was falling, and the grasp of which he had felt in losing consciousness, was the hand of Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean had taken no other part in the combat than to expose himself. Save for him, in that supreme phase of the death-struggle, nobody would have thought of the wounded. Thanks to him, everywhere present in the carnage like a providence, those who fell were taken up, carried into the basement-room, and their wounds dressed. In the intervals, he repaired the barricade. But nothing which could resemble a blow, an attack, or even a personal defence, came from his hands. He was silent, and gave aid. Moreover, he had only a few scratches. The balls refused him. If suicide were a part of what had occurred to him in coming to this sepulchre, in that respect he had not succeeded. But we doubt whether he had thought of suicide, an irreligious act.

Jean Valjean, in the thick cloud of the combat, did not appear to see Marius; the fact is, that he did not take his eyes from him. When a shot struck down Marius, Jean Valjean bounded with the agility of a tiger, dropped upon him as upon a prey, and carried him away.

The whirlwind of the attack at that instant concentrated so fiercely upon Enjolras and the door of the wine-shop, that nobody saw Jean Valjean cross the unpaved field of the barricade, holding the senseless Marius in his arms, and disappear behind the corner of the house of Corinth.

There Jean Valjean stopped; he let Marius slide to the ground, set his back to the wall, and cast his eyes about him.

The situation was appalling.

For the moment, for two or three minutes, perhaps, this skirt of wall was a shelter; but how escape from this massacre? He remembered the anguish in which he was in the Rue Polonceau, eight years before, and how he had succeeded in escaping; that was difficult then, to-day it was impossible. Before him he had that deaf and implacable house of six stories, which seemed inhabited only by a dead man, leaning over his window; on his right he had the low barricade, which closed the Petite Truanderie; to clamber over this obstacle appeared easy, but above the crest of the wall a range of bayonet-points could be seen. A company of the line was posted beyond this barricade, on the watch. It was evident that to cross the barricade was to meet the fire of a platoon, and that every head which should venture to rise above the top of the wall of paving-stones would serve as a target for sixty muskets. At his left he had the field of the combat. Death was behind the corner of the wall.

What should he do?

A bird alone could have extricated himself from that place.

And he must decide upon the spot, find an expedient, adopt his course. They were fighting a few steps from him; by good luck all were fiercely intent upon a single point, the door of the wine-shop; but let one soldier, a single one, conceive the idea of turning the house, of attacking it in flank, and all was over.

Jean Valjean looked at the house in front of him, he looked at the barricade by the side of him, then he looked upon the ground, with the violence of the last extremity, in desperation, and as if he would have made a hole in it with his eyes.

Beneath his persistent look, something vaguely tangible in such an agony outlined itself and took form at his feet, as if there were a power in the eyes to develop the thing desired. He perceived a few steps from him, at the foot of the little wall so pitilessly watched and guarded on the outside, under some fallen paving-stones which partly hid it, an iron grating laid flat and level with the ground. This grating, made of strong transverse bars, was about two feet square. The stone frame which held it had been torn up, and it was as it were unset. Through the bars a glimpse could be caught of an obscure opening, something like the flue of a chimney or the main of a cistern. Jean Valjean sprang forward. His old science of escape mounted to his brain like a flash. To remove the stones, to lift the grating, to load Marius, who was as inert as a dead body, upon his shoulders, to descend, with that burden upon his back, by the aid of his elbows and knees, into this kind of well, fortunately not very deep, to let fall over his head the heavy iron trapdoor upon which the stones were shaken back again, to find a foothold upon a flagged surface ten feet below the ground, this was executed like what is done in delirium, with the strength of a giant and the rapidity of an eagle; it required but very few moments.

Jean Valjean found himself, with Marius still senseless, in a sort of long underground passage.

There, deep peace, absolute silence, night.

The impression which he had formerly felt in falling from the street into the convent came back from him. Only, what he was now carrying away was not Cosette; it was Marius.

He could now hardly hear above him, like a vague murmur, the fearful tumult of the wine-shop taken by assault.

BOOK II—MIRE, BUT SOUL

THE CLOACA AND ITS SURPRISES

It was in the sewer of Paris that Jean Valjean found himself.

The transition was marvellous. From the very centre of the city, Jean Valjean had gone out of the city, and, in the twinkling of an eye, the time of lifting a cover and closing it again, he had passed from broad day to complete obscurity, from noon to midnight, from uproar to silence, from the whirl of the thunder to the stagnation of the tomb, and, by a mutation much more prodigious still than that of the Rue Polonceau, from the most extreme peril to the most absolute security.

Sudden fall into a cave; disappearance in the dungeon of Paris; to leave that street in which death was everywhere for this kind sepulchre in which there was life was an astounding crisis. He remained for some seconds as if stunned; listening, stupefied. The spring trap of safety had suddenly opened beneath him. Celestial goodness had in some sort taken him by treachery. Adorable ambuscades of Providence!

Only, the wounded man did not stir, and Jean Valjean did not know whether what he was carrying away in this grave were alive or dead.

His first sensation was blindness. Suddenly he saw nothing more. It seemed to him also that in one minute he had become deaf. He heard nothing more. The frenzied storm of murder which was raging a few feet above him only reached him, as we have said, thanks to the thickness of the earth which separated him from it, stifled and indistinct, and like a rumbling at a great depth. He felt that it was solid under his feet; that was all; but that was enough. He reached out one hand, then the other, and touched the wall on both sides, and realised that the passage was narrow; he slipped, and realised that the pavement was wet. He advanced one foot with precaution, fearing a hole, a pit, some gulf; he made sure that the flagging continued. A whiff of fetidness informed him where he was.

After a few moments, he ceased to be blind. A little light fell from the air-hole through which he had slipped in, and his eye became accustomed to this cave. He began to distinguish something. The passage in which he was earthed, no other word better expresses the condition, was walled up behind him. It was one of those cul-de-sacs technically called branchments. Before him, there was another wall, a wall of night. The light from the air-hole died out ten or twelve paces from the point at which Jean Valjean stood, and scarcely produced a pallid whiteness over a few yards of the damp wall of the sewer. Beyond, the opaqueness was massive; to penetrate it appeared horrible, and to enter it seemed like being engulfed. He could, however, force his way into that wall of mist, and he must do it. He must even hasten. Jean Valjean thought that that grating, noticed by him under the paving-stones, might also be noticed by the soldiers, and that all depended upon that chance. They also could descend into the well and explore it. There was not a minute to be lost. He had laid Marius upon the ground, he gathered him up, this is again the right word, replaced him upon his shoulders, and began his journey. He resolutely entered that obscurity.

The truth is that they were not so safe as Jean Valjean supposed. Perils of another kind, and not less great, awaited them perhaps. After the flashing whirl of the combat, the cavern of miasmas and pitfalls; after chaos, the cloaca. Jean Valjean had fallen from one circle of Hell to another.

At the end of fifty paces he was obliged to stop. A question presented itself. The passage terminated in another which it met transversely. These two roads were offered. Which should he take? should he turn to the left or to the right? How guide himself in this black labyrinth? This labyrinth, as we can understand, has a clue: its descent. To follow the descent is to go to the river.

Jean Valjean understood this at once.

He said to himself that he was probably in the sewer of the markets; that, if he should choose the left and follow the descent, he would come in less than a quarter of an hour to some mouth upon the Seine between the Pont au Change and the Pont Neuf, that is to say, he would reappear in broad day in the most populous portion of Paris. He might come out in some gathering of corner idlers. Amazement of the passers-by at seeing two bloody men come out of the ground under their feet. Arrival of sergent de ville, call to arms in the next guard-house. He would be seized before getting out. It was better to plunge into the labyrinth, to trust to this darkness, and to rely on Providence for the issue.

He chose the right, and went up the ascent.

When he had turned the corner of the gallery, the distant gleam of the air-hole disappeared, the curtain of obscurity fell back over him, and he became blind. He went forward none the less, and as rapidly as he could. Marius' arms were passed about his neck, and his feet hung behind him. He held both arms with one hand, and groped for the wall with the other. Marius' cheek touched his and stuck to it, being bloody. He felt a warm stream, which came from Marius, flow over him and penetrate his clothing. Still, a moist warmth at his ear, which touched the wounded man's mouth, indicated respiration, and consequently life. The passage through which Jean Valjean was now moving was not so small as the first. Jean Valjean walked in it with difficulty. The rains of the previous day had not yet run off, and made a little stream in the centre of the floor, and he was compelled to hug the wall, to keep his feet out of the water. Thus he went on in midnight. He resembled the creatures of night groping in the invisible, and lost underground in the veins of the darkness.

However, little by little, whether that some distant air-holes sent a little floating light into this opaque mist, or that his eyes became accustomed to the obscurity, some dim vision came back to him, and he again began to receive a confused perception, now of the wall which he was touching, and now of the arch under which he was passing. The pupil dilates in the night, and at last finds day in it, even as the soul dilates in misfortune, and at last finds God in it.

To find his way was difficult.

The track of the sewers echoes, so to speak, the track of the streets which overlie them. There were in the Paris of that day two thousand two hundred streets. Picture to yourselves below them that forest of dark branches which is called the sewer. The sewers existing at that epoch, placed end to end, would have given a length of thirty miles.

Suddenly he was surprised. At the most unexpected moment, and without having diverged from a straight line, he discovered that he was no longer rising; the water of the brook struck coming against his heels instead of upon the top of his feet. The sewer now descended. What? would he then soon reach the Seine? This danger was great but the peril of retreat was still greater. He continued to advance.

At a certain moment he felt that he was getting away from under the Paris which was petrified by the émeute, in which the barricades had suppressed the circulation, and that he was coming beneath the Paris which was alive and normal. He heard suddenly above his head a sound like thunder, distant, but continuous. It was the rumbling of the vehicles.

He had been walking for about half an hour, at least by his own calculation, and had not yet thought of resting; only he had changed the hand which supported Marius. The darkness was deeper than ever, but this depth reassured him.

All at once he saw his shadow before him. It was marked out on a feeble ruddiness almost indistinct, which vaguely empurpled the floor at his feet, and the arch over his head, and which glided along at his right and his left on the two slimy walls of the corridor. In amazement he turned round.

Behind him, in the portion of the passage through which he had passed, at a distance which appeared to him immense, flamed, throwing its rays into the dense obscurity, a sort of horrible star which appeared to be looking at him.

It was the gloomy star of the police which was rising in the sewer.

Behind this star were moving without order eight or ten black forms, straight, indistinct, terrible.

EXPLANATION

During the day of the 6th of June, a battue of the sewers had been ordered. It was feared that they would be taken as a refuge by the vanquished, and prefect Gisquet was to ransack the occult Paris, while General Bugeaud was sweeping the public Paris; a connected double operation which demanded a double strategy of the public power, represented above by the army and below by the police. Three platoons of officers and sewer-men explored the subterranean streets of Paris, the first, the right bank, the second, the left bank, the third, in the City.

The officers were armed with carbines, clubs, swords, and daggers.

That which was at this moment directed upon Jean Valjean, was the lantern of the patrol of the right bank.

This patrol had just visited the crooked gallery and the three blind alleys which are beneath the Rue du Cadran. While they were taking their candle to the bottom of these blind alleys, Jean Valjean had come to the entrance of the gallery upon his way, had found it narrower than the principal passage, and had not entered it. He had passed beyond. The policemen, on coming out from the Cadran gallery, had thought they heard the sound of steps in the direction of the belt sewer. It was in fact Jean Valjean's steps. The sergeant in command of the patrol lifted his lantern, and the squad began to look into the mist in the direction whence the sound came.

This was to Jean Valjean an indescribable moment.

Luckily, if he saw the lantern well, the lantern saw him badly. It was light and he saw shadow. He was far off, and merged in the blackness of the place. He drew close to the side of the wall, and stopped.

Still, he formed no idea of what was moving there behind him. Lack of sleep, want of food, emotions, had thrown him also into the visionary state. He saw a flaring flame, and about that flame, goblins. What was it? He did not understand.

Jean Valjean having stopped, the noise ceased.

The men of the patrol listened and heard nothing, they looked and saw nothing. They consulted.

There was at that period a sort of square at this point of the Montmartre sewer, called *de service,* which has since been suppressed on account of the little interior lake which formed in it, by the damming up in heavy storms of the torrents of rain water. The patrol could gather in a group in this square.

Jean Valjean saw these goblins from a kind of circle. These mastiff's heads drew near each other and whispered.

The result of this council held by the watch-dogs was that they had been mistaken, that there had been no noise, that there was nobody there, that it was needless to trouble themselves with the belt sewer, that that would be time lost, but that they must hasten towards Saint Merry, that if there were anything to do and any "bousingot" to track out, it was in that quarter.

From time to time parties put new soles to their old terms of insult. In 1832, the word *bousingot* filled the interim between the word *jacobin,* which was worn out, and the word *demagogue,* then almost unused, but which has since done such excellent service.

The sergeant gave the order to file left towards the descent to the Seine. If they had conceived the idea of dividing into two squads and going in both directions, Jean Valjean would have been caught. That hung by this thread. It is probable that the instructions from the prefecture, foreseeing the possibility of a combat and that the insurgents might be numerous, forbade the patrol to separate. The patrol resumed its march, leaving Jean Valjean behind. Of all these movements, Jean Valjean perceived nothing except the eclipse of the lantern, which suddenly turned back.

Before going away, the sergeant, to ease the police conscience, discharged his carbine in the direction they were abandoning, towards Jean Valjean. The detonation rolled from echo to echo in the vault like the rumbling of this titanic bowel. Some plastering which fell into the stream and spattered the water a few steps from Jean Valjean made him aware that the ball had struck the arch above his head.

Slow and measured steps resounded upon the floor for some time, more and more deadened by the progressive increase of the distance, the group of black forms sank away, a glimmer oscillated and floated, making a ruddy circle in the vault, which decreased, then disappeared, the silence became deep again, the obscurity became again complete, blindness and deafness resumed possession of the darkness; and Jean Valjean, not yet daring to stir, stood for a long time with his back to the wall, his ear intent and eye dilated, watching the vanishing of that phantom patrol.

THE MAN SPUN

We must do the police of that period this justice that, even in the gravest public conjunctures, it imperturbably performed its duties watchful and sanitary. An émeute was not in its eyes a pretext for giving malefactors a loose rein, and for neglecting society because the government was in peril. The ordinary duty was performed correctly in addition to the extraordinary duty, and was not disturbed by it. In the midst of the beginning of an incalculable political event, under the pressure of a possible revolution, without allowing himself to be diverted by the insurrection and the barricade, an officer would "spin" a thief.

Something precisely like this occurred in the afternoon of the 6th of June at the brink of the Seine, on the beach of the right bank, a little beyond the Pont des Invalides.

There is no beach there now. The appearance of the place has changed. On this beach, two men some distance apart seemed to be observing each other, one avoiding the other. The one who was going before was endeavouring to increase the distance, the one who came behind to lessen it.

It was like a game of chess played from a distance and silently. Neither seemed to hurry, and both walked slowly, as if either feared that by too much haste he would double the pace of his partner.

One would have said it was an appetite following a prey, without appearing to do it on purpose. The prey was crafty, and kept on its guard.

The requisite proportions between the tracked marten and the tracking hound were observed. He who was trying to escape had a feeble frame and a sorry mien; he who was trying to seize, a fellow of tall stature, was rough in aspect, and promised to be rough in encounter.

The first, feeling himself the weaker, was avoiding the second; but he avoided him in a very furious way; he who could have observed him would have seen in his eyes the gloomy hostility of flight, and all the menace which there is in fear.

The beach was solitary; there were no passers; not even a boatman nor a lighterman on the barges moored here and there.

It is true that this end of the beach was masked from sight by a mound of rubbish from six to seven feet high, the product of some demolition. But did this man hope to hide with any effect behind this heap of fragments, which the other had only to turn. The expedient would have been puerile. He certainly did not dream of it. The innocence of robbers does not reach this extent.

The heap of rubbish made a sort of eminence at the edge of the water, which was prolonged like a promontory, as far as the wall of the quai.

The man pursued reached this little hill and doubled it, so that he ceased to be seen by the other.

The latter, not seeing, was not seen; he took advantage of this to abandon all dissimulation, and to walk very rapidly. In a few seconds he came to the mound of rubbish, and turned it. There, he stopped in amazement. The man whom he was hunting was gone.

The beach beyond the mound of rubbish had scarcely a length of thirty yards, then it plunged beneath the water which beat against the wall of the quai.

The fugitive could not have thrown himself into the Seine nor scaled the quai without being seen by him who was following him. What had become of him?

The man in his closely buttoned coat walked to the end of the beach, and stopped there a moment thoughtful, his fists convulsive, his eyes ferreting. Suddenly he slapped his forehead. He had noticed at the point where the land and the water began, an iron grating broad and low, arched, with a heavy lock and three massive hinges. This grating, a sort of door cut into the bottom of the quai, opened upon the river as much as upon the beach. A blackish stream flowed from beneath it. This stream emptied into the Seine.

Beyond its heavy rusty bars could be distinguished a sort of corridor arched and obscure.

The man folded his arms and looked at the grating reproachfully.

HE ALSO BEARS HIS CROSS

Jean Valjean had resumed his advance, and had not stopped again.

This advance became more and more laborious. The level of these arches varies; the medium height is about five feet six inches, and was calculated for the stature of a man; Jean Valjean was compelled to bend so as not to hit Marius against the arch; he had to stoop every second, then rise up, to grope incessantly for the wall. The moisture of the stones and the sliminess of the floor made them bad points of support, whether for the hand or the foot. He was wading in the hideous muck of the city. The occasional gleams from the air-holes appeared only at long intervals, and so ghastly were they that the noonday seemed but moonlight; all the rest was mist, miasma, opacity, blackness. Jean Valjean was hungry and thirsty; thirsty especially; and this place, like the sea, is one full of water where you cannot drink. His strength, which was prodigious, and very little diminished by age, thanks to his chaste and sober life, began to give way notwithstanding. Fatigue grew upon him, and as his strength diminished the weight of his load increased. Marius, dead perhaps, weighed heavily upon him as inert bodies do. Jean Valjean supported him in such a way that his breast was not compressed and his breathing could always be as free as possible. He felt the rapid gliding of the rats between his legs. One of them was so frightened as to bite him. There came to him from time to time through the aprons of the mouths of the sewer a breath of fresh air which revived him.

It might have been three o'clock in the afternoon when he arrived at the belt sewer.

He was first astonished at this sudden enlargement. He abruptly found himself in the gallery where his outstretched hands did not reach the two walls, and under an arch which his head did not touch. The Grand Sewer indeed is eight feet wide and seven high.

At the point where the Montmartre sewer joins the Grand Sewer, two other subterranean galleries, that of the Rue de Provence and that of the Abattoir, coming in, make a square. Between these four ways, a less sagacious man would have been undecided. Jean Valjean took the widest, that is to say, the belt sewer. But there the question returned: to descend, or to ascend? He thought that the condition of affairs was urgent, and that he must, at whatever risk, now reach the Seine. In other words, descend. He turned to the left.

His instinct served him well. To descend was, in fact, possible safety.

He left on his right the two passages which ramify in the form of a claw under the Rue Lafitte and the Rue Saint Georges, and the long forked corridor of the Chaussée d'Antin.

A little beyond an affluent which was probably the branching of the Madeleine, he stopped. He was very tired. A large air-hole, probably the vista on the Rue d'Anjou, produced an almost vivid light. Jean Valjean, with the gentleness of movement of a brother for his wounded brother, laid Marius upon the side bank of the sewer. Marius' bloody face appeared, under the white gleam from the air-hole, as if at the bottom of a tomb. His eyes were closed, his hair adhered to his temples like brushes dried in red paint, his hands dropped down lifeless, his limbs were cold, there was coagulated blood at the corners of his mouth. A clot of blood had gathered in the tie of his cravat; his shirt was bedded in the wounds, the cloth of his coat chafed the gaping gashes in the living flesh. Jean Valjean, removing the garments with the ends of his fingers, laid his hand upon his breast; the heart still beat. Jean Valjean tore up his shirt, bandaged the wounds as well as he could, and staunched the flowing blood; then, bending in the twilight over Marius, who was still unconscious and almost lifeless, he looked at him with an inexpressible hatred.

In opening Marius' clothes, he had found two things in his pockets, the bread which had been forgotten there since the day previous, and Marius' pocket-book. He ate the bread and opened the pocket-book. On the first page he found the four lines written by Marius. They will be remembered:

> "My name is Marius Pontmercy. Carry my corpse to my grandfather's, M. Gillenormand, Rue des Filles du Calvaire, No. 6, in the Marais."

By the light of the air-hole, Jean Valjean read these four lines, and stopped a moment as if absorbed in himself, repeating in an undertone: "Rue des Filles du Calvaire, Number Six, Monsieur Gillenormand." He replaced the pocket-book in Marius' pocket. He had eaten, strength had returned to him: he took Marius on his back again, laid his head carefully upon his right shoulder, and began to descend the sewer.

The Grand Sewer, following the course of the valley of Ménilmontant, is almost two leagues in length. It is paved for a considerable part of its course.

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MARIUS' BLOODY FACE APPEARED, UNDER THE WHITE GLEAM FROM THE AIR-HOLE, AS IF AT THE BOTTOM OF A TOMB

This torch of the name of the streets of Paris with which we are illuminating Jean Valjean's subterranean advance for the reader, Jean Valjean did not have. Nothing told him what zone of the city he was passing through, nor what route he had followed. Only the growing pallor of the gleams of light which he saw from time to time, indicated that the sun was withdrawing from the pavement, and that the day would soon be gone; and the rumbling of the waggons above his head, from continuous having become intermittent, then having almost ceased, he concluded that he was under central Paris no longer, and that he was approaching some solitary region, in the vicinity of the outer boulevards or the furthest quais. Where there are fewer houses and fewer streets, the sewer has fewer air-holes. The darkness thickened about Jean Valjean. He none the less continued to advance, groping in the obscurity.

This obscurity suddenly became terrible.

THE FONTIS

Jean Valjean found himself in presence of a fontis.

This kind of settling was then frequent in the subsoil of the Champs Elysées, very unfavourable for hydraulic works, and giving poor support to underground constructions, from its excessive fluidity. This fluidity surpasses even that of the sands of the Saint Georges quartier, which could only be overcome by stonework upon concrete, and the clayey beds infected with gas in the quartier of the Martyrs, so liquid that the passage could be effected under the gallery of the martyrs only by means of a metallic tube. When, in 1836, they demolished, for the purpose of rebuilding, the old stone sewer under the Faubourg Saint Honoré, in which we find Jean Valjean now entangled, the quicksand, which is the subsoil from the Champs Elysées to the Seine, was such an obstacle that the work lasted nearly six months, to the great outcry of the bordering proprietors, especially the proprietors of hotels and coaches. The work was more than difficult; it was dangerous. It is true that there were four months and a half of rain, and three risings of the Seine.

The fontis which Jean Valjean fell upon was caused by the showers of the previous day. A yielding of the pavement, imperfectly upheld by the underlying sand, had occasioned a damming of the rain-water. Infiltration having taken place, sinking had followed. The floor, broken up, had disappeared in the mire. For what distance? Impossible to say. The obscurity was deeper than anywhere else. It was a mudhole in the cavern of night.

Jean Valjean felt the pavement slipping away under him. He entered into this slime. It was water on the surface, mire at the bottom. He must surely pass through. To retrace his steps was impossible. Marius was expiring, and Jean Valjean exhausted. Where else could he go? Jean Valjean advanced. Moreover, the quagmire appeared not very deep for a few steps. But in proportion as he advanced, his feet sank in. He very soon had the mire half-knee deep, and water above his knees. He walked on, holding Marius with both arms as high above the water as he could. The mud now came up to his knees, and the water to his waist. He could no longer turn back. He sank in deeper and deeper. This mire, dense enough for one man's weight, evidently could not bear two. Marius and Jean Valjean would have had a chance of escape separately. Jean Valjean continued to advance, supporting this dying man, who was perhaps a corpse.

The water came up to his armpits; he felt that he was foundering; it was with difficulty that he could move in the depth of mire in which he was. The density, which was the support, was also the obstacle. He still held Marius up, and, with an unparalleled outlay of strength, he advanced; but he sank deeper. He now had only his head out of the water, and his arms supporting Marius. There is, in the old pictures of the deluge, a mother doing thus with her child.

He sank still deeper, he threw his face back to escape the water, and to be able to breathe; he who should have seen him in this obscurity would have thought he saw a mask floating upon the darkness; he dimly perceived Marius' drooping head and livid face above him; he made a desperate effort, and thrust his foot forward; his foot struck something solid; a support. It was time.

He rose and writhed and rooted himself upon this support with a sort of fury. It produced the effect upon him of the first step of a staircase reascending towards life.

This support, discovered in the mire at the last moment, was the beginning of the other slope of the floor, which had bent without breaking, and had curved beneath the water like a board, and in a single piece. A well-constructed paving forms an arch, and has this firmness. This fragment of the floor, partly submerged, but solid, was a real slope, and, once upon this slope, they were saved. Jean Valjean ascended this inclined plane, and reached the other side of the quagmire.

On coming out of the water, he struck against a stone, and fell upon his knees. This seemed to him fitting, and he remained thus for some time, his soul lost in unspoken prayer to God.

He rose, shivering, chilled, infected, bending beneath this dying man, whom he was dragging on, all dripping with slime, his soul filled with a strange light.

SOMETIMES WE GET AGROUND WHEN WE EXPECT TO GET ASHORE

He resumed his route once more.

However, if he had not left his life in the fontis, he seemed to have left his strength. This supreme effort had exhausted him. His exhaustion was so great, that every three or four steps he was obliged to take breath, and leaned against the wall. Once he had to sit down upon the curb to change Marius's position, and he thought he should stay there. But if his vigour were dead, his energy was not. He rose again.

He walked with desperation, almost with rapidity, for a hundred paces, without raising his head, almost without breathing, and suddenly struck against the wall. He had reached an angle of the sewer, and, arriving at the turn with his head down, he had encountered the wall. He raised his eyes, and at the extremity of the passage, down there before him, far, very far away, he perceived a light. This time, it was not the terrible light; it was the good and white light. It was the light of day.

Jean Valjean saw the outlet.

A condemned soul who, from the midst of the furnace, should suddenly perceive an exit from Gehenna, would feel what Jean Valjean felt. It would fly frantically with the stumps of its burned wings towards the radiant door. Jean Valjean felt exhaustion no more, he felt Marius's weight no longer, he found again his knees of steel, he ran rather than walked. As he approached, the outlet assumed more and more distinct outline. It was a circular arch, not so high as the vault which sank down by degrees, and not so wide as the gallery which narrowed as the top grew lower. The tunnel ended on the inside in the form of a funnel; a vicious contraction, copied from the wickets of houses of detention, logical in a prison, illogical in a sewer, and which has since been corrected.

Jean Valjean reached the outlet.

There he stopped.

It was indeed the outlet, but it did not let him out.

The arch was closed by a strong grating, and the grating which, according to all appearance, rarely turned upon its rusty hinges, was held in its stone frame by a stout lock which, red with rust, seemed an enormous brick. He could see the keyhole, and the strong bolt deeply plunged into the iron staple. The lock was plainly a double-lock. It was one of those Bastille locks of which the old Paris was so lavish.

Beyond the grating, the open air, the river, the daylight, the beach, very narrow, but sufficient to get away. The distant quais, Paris, that gulf in which one is so easily lost, the wide horizon, liberty. He distinguished at his right, below him, the Pont d'Iéna, and at his left, above, the Pont des Invalides; the spot would have been propitious for awaiting night and escaping. It was one of the most solitary points in Paris; the beach which fronts on the Gros Caillou. The flies came in and went out through the bars of the grating.

It might have been half-past eight o'clock in the evening. The day was declining.

Jean Valjean laid Marius along the wall on the dry part of the floor. then walked to the grating and clenched the bars with both hands; the shaking was frenzied, the shock nothing. The grating did not stir. Jean Valjean seized the bars one after another, hoping to be able to tear out the least solid one, and to make a lever of it to lift the door or break the lock. Not a bar yielded. A tiger's teeth are not more solid in their sockets. No lever; no possible purchase. The obstacle was invincible. No means of opening the door.

Must he then perish there? What should he do? what would become of them? go back; recommence the terrible road which he had already traversed; he had not the strength. Besides, how cross that quagmire again, from which he had escaped only by a miracle? And after the quagmire, was there not that police patrol from which, certainly, one would not escape twice? And then where should he go? what direction take? to follow the descent was not to reach the goal. Should he come to another outlet, he would find it obstructed by a door or a grating. All the outlets were undoubtedly closed in this way. Chance had unsealed the grating by which they had entered, but evidently all the other mouths of the sewer were fastened. He had only succeeded in escaping into a prison.

It was over. All that Jean Valjean had done was useless. Exhaustion ended in abortion.

They were both caught in the gloomy and immense web of death, and Jean Valjean felt running over those black threads trembling in the darkness, the appalling spider.

He turned his back to the grating, and dropped upon the pavement, rather prostrate than sitting, beside the yet motionless Marius, and his head sank between his knees. No exit. This was the last drop of anguish.

Of whom did he think in this overwhelming dejection? Neither of himself nor of Marius. He thought of Cosette.

THE TORN COAT-TAIL

In the midst of this annihilation, a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a voice which spoke low, said to him:

"Go halves."

Somebody in that darkness? Nothing is so like a dream as despair, Jean Valjean thought he was dreaming. He had heard no steps. Was it possible? he raised his eyes.

A man was before him.

This man was dressed in a blouse; he was barefooted; he held his shoes in his left hand; he had evidently taken them off to be able to reach Jean Valjean without being heard.

Jean Valjean had not a moment's hesitation. Unforeseen as was the encounter, this man was known to him. This man was Thénardier.

Although wakened, so to speak, with a start, Jean Valjean, accustomed to be on the alert and on the watch for unexpected blows which he must quickly parry, instantly regained possession of all his presence of mind. Besides, the condition of affairs could not be worse, a certain degree of distress is no longer capable of crescendo, and Thénardier himself could not add to the blackness of this night.

There was a moment of delay.

Thénardier, lifting his right hand to the height of his forehead, shaded his eyes with it, then brought his brows together while he winked his eyes, which, with a slight pursing of the mouth, characterises the sagacious attention of a man who is seeking to recognise another. He did not succeed. Jean Valjean, we have just said, turned his back to the light, and was moreover so disfigured, so muddy and so blood-stained, that in full noon he would have been unrecognisable. On the other hand, with the light from the grating shining in his face, a cellar light, it is true, livid, but precise in its lividness, Thénardier, as the energetic, trite metaphor expresses it, struck Jean Valjean at once. This inequality of conditions was enough to insure Jean Valjean some advantage in this mysterious duel which was about to open between the two conditions and the two men. The encounter took place between Jean Valjean veiled and Thénardier unmasked.

Jean Valjean perceived immediately that Thénardier did not recognise him.

They gazed at each other for a moment in this penumbra, as if they were taking each other's measure. Thénardier was first to break the silence.

"How are you going to manage to get out?"

Jean Valjean did not answer.

Thénardier continued:

"Impossible to pick the lock. Still you must get away from here."

"That is true," said Jean Valjean.

"Well, go halves."

"What do you mean?"

"You have killed the man; very well. For my part, I have the key."

Thénardier pointed at Marius. He went on:

"I don't know you, but I would like to help you. You must be a friend.

Jean Valjean began to understand. Thénardier took him for an assassin.

Thénardier resumed.

"Listen, comrade. You haven't killed that man without looking to what he had in his pockets. Give me my half. I will open the door for you."

And, drawing a big key half out from under his blouse, which was full of holes, he added:

"Would you like to see how the key of the fields is made? There it is."

Jean Valjean "remained stupid," the expression is the elder Corneille's, so far as to doubt whether what he saw was real. It was Providence appearing in a guise of horror, and the good angel springing out of the ground under the form of Thénardier.

Thénardier plunged his fist into a huge pocket hidden under his blouse, pulled out a rope, and handed it to Jean Valjean.

"Here," said he, "I'll give you the rope to boot."

"A rope, what for?"

"You want a stone too, but you'll find one outside. There is a heap of rubbish there."

"A stone, what for?"

"Fool, as you are going to throw the *pantre* into the river, you want a stone and a rope; without them it would float on the water."

Jean Valjean took the rope. Everybody has accepted things thus mechanically.

Thénardier snapped his fingers as over the arrival of a sudden idea:

"Ah now, comrade, how did you manage to get out of the quagmire yonder? I haven't dared to risk myself there. Pugh! you don't smell good."

After a pause, he added:

"I ask you questions, but you are right in not answering them. That is an apprenticeship for the examining judge's cursed quarter of an hour. And then by not speaking at all, you run no risk of speaking too loud. It is all the same, because I don't see your face, and because I don't know your name, you would do wrong to suppose that I don't know who you are and what you want. Understood.

You have smashed this gentleman a little; now you want to squeeze him somewhere. You need the river, the great hide-folly. I am going to get you out of the scrape. To help a good fellow in trouble that puts my boots on."

While approving Jean Valjean for keeping silence, he was evidently seeking to make him speak. He pushed his shoulders, so as to endeavour to see his side-face, and exclaimed, without however rising above the moderate tone in which he kept his voice:

"Speaking of the quagmire, you are a proud animal. Why didn't you throw the man in there?"

Jean Valjean preserved silence.

Thénardier resumed, raising the rag which served him as a cravat up to his Adam's apple, a gesture which completes the air of sagacity of a serious man:

"Indeed, perhaps you have acted prudently. The workmen when they come to-morrow to stop the hole, would certainly have found the *pantinois* forgotten there, and they would have been able, thread by thread, straw by straw, to *pincer* the trace, and to reach you. Something has passed through the sewer. Who? Where did he come out? Did anybody see him come out? The police has plenty of brains. The sewer is treacherous and informs against you. Such a discovery is a rarity, it attracts attention, few people use the sewer in their business while the river is at everybody's service. The river is the true grave. At the month's end, they fish you up the man at the nets of Saint Cloud. Well, what does that amount to? It is a carcase, indeed! Who killed this man? Paris. And justice don't even inquire into it. You have done right."

The more loquacious Thénardier was, the more dumb was Jean Valjean. Thénardier pushed his shoulder anew.

"Now, let us finish the business. Let us divide. You have seen my key, show me your money."

Thénardier was haggard, tawny, equivocal, a little threatening, nevertheless friendly.

There was one strange circumstance; Thénardier's manner was not natural; he did not appear entirely at his ease; while he did not affect an air of mystery, he talked low; from time to time he laid his finger on his mouth, and muttered: "Hush!" It was difficult to guess why. There was nobody there but them. Jean Valjean thought that perhaps some other bandits were hidden in some recess not far off, and Thénardier did not care to share with them.

Thénardier resumed:

"Let us finish. How much did the *pantre* have in his deeps?"

Jean Valjean felt in his pockets.

It was, as will be remembered, his custom always to have money about him. The gloomy life of expedients to which he was condemned, made this a law to him. This time, however, he was caught unprovided. On putting on his national guard's uniform, the evening before, he had forgotten, gloomily absorbed as he was, to take his pocket-book with him. He had only some coins in his waistcoat pocket. He turned out his pocket, all soaked with filth, and displayed upon the curb of the sewer a louis d'or, two five-franc pieces, and five or six big sous.

Thénardier thrust out his under lip with a significant twist of the neck.

"You didn't kill him very dear," said he.

He began to handle, in all familiarity, the pockets of Jean Valjean and Marius. Jean Valjean, principally concerned in keeping his back to the light, did not interfere with him. While he was feeling of Marius's coat, Thénardier, with the dexterity of a juggler, found means, without attracting Jean Valjean's attention, to tear off a strip, which he hid under his blouse, probably thinking that this scrap of cloth might assist him afterwards to identify the assassinated man and the assassin. He found, however, nothing more than the thirty francs.

"It is true," said he, "both together, you have no more than that."

And, forgetting his words, *go halves,* he took the whole.

He hesitated a little before the big sous. Upon reflection, he took them also, mumbling:

"No matter! this is to *suriner* people too cheap."

This said he took the key from under his blouse anew.

"Now, friend, you must get out. This like the fair, you pay on going out. You have paid, go out."

And he began to laugh.

That he had, in extending to an unknown man the help of this key, and in causing another man than himself to go out by this door, the pure and disinterested intention of saving an assassin, is something which it is permissible to doubt.

Thénardier helped Jean Valjean to replace Marius upon his shoulders; then he went towards the grating upon the points of his bare feet, beckoning to Jean Valjean to follow him, he looked outside, laid his finger on his mouth, and stood a few seconds as if in suspense; the inspection over, he put the key into the lock. The bolt slid and the door turned. There was neither snapping nor grinding. It was done very quietly. It was plain that this grating and its hinges, oiled with care, were opened oftener than would have been guessed. This quiet was ominous; you felt in the furtive goings and comings, the silent entrances and exits of the men of the night, and the wolf-like tread of crime. The sewer was evidently in complicity with some mysterious band. This taciturn grating was a receiver.

Thénardier half opened the door, left just a passage for Jean Valjean, closed the grating again, turned the key twice in the lock, and plunged back into the obscurity, without making more noise than a breath. He seemed to walk with the velvet paws of a tiger. A moment afterwards, this hideous providence had entered again into the invisible.

Jean Valjean found himself outside.

MARIUS SEEMS TO BE DEAD TO ONE WHO IS A GOOD JUDGE

He let Marius slide down upon the beach.

They were outside!

The miasmas, the obscurity, the horror, were behind him. The balmy air, pure, living, joyful, freely respirable, flowed around him. Everywhere about him silence, but the charming silence of a sunset in a clear sky. Twilight had fallen; night was coming, the great liberatress, the friend of all those who need a mantle of darkness to escape from an anguish. The sky extended on every side like an enormous calm. The river came to his feet with the sound of a kiss. He heard the airy dialogues of the nests bidding each other good night in the elms of the Champs Elysées. A few stars, faintly piercing the pale blue of the zenith, and visible to reverie alone, produced their imperceptible little resplendencies in the immensity. Evening was unfolding over Jean Valjean's head all the caresses of the infinite.

It was the undecided and exquisite hour which says neither yes nor no. There was already night enough for one to be lost in it at a little distance, and still day enough for one to be recognised near at hand.

Jean Valjean was for a few seconds irresistibly overcome by all this august and caressing serenity; there are such moments of forgetfulness; suffering refuses to harass the wretched; all is eclipsed in thought; peace covers the dreamer like a night; and, under the twilight which is flinging forth its rays, and in imitation of the sky which is illuminating, the soul becomes starry. Jean Valjean could not but gaze at that vast clear shadow which was above him; pensive, he took in the majestic silence of the eternal heavens, a bath of ecstasy and prayer. Then, hastily, as if a feeling of duty came back to him, he bent over Marius, and, dipping up some water in the hollow of his hand, he threw a few drops gently into his face. Marius' eyelids did not part; but his half-open mouth breathed.

Jean Valjean was plunging his hand into the river again, when suddenly he felt an indescribable uneasiness, such as we feel when we have somebody behind us, without seeing him.

We have already referred elsewhere to this impression, with which everybody is happy.

He turned round.

As just before, somebody was indeed behind him.

A man of tall stature, wrapped in a long overcoat, with folded arms, and holding in his right hand a club, the leaden knob of which could be seen, stood erect a few steps in the rear of Jean Valjean, who was stooping over Marius.

It was, with the aid of the shadow, a sort of apparition. A simple man would have been afraid on account of the twilight, and a reflective man on account of the club.

Jean Valjean recognised Javert.

The reader has doubtless guessed that Thénardier's pursuer was none other than Javert. Javert, after his unhoped-for departure from the barricade, had gone to the prefecture of police, had given an account verbally to the prefect in person in a short audience, had then immediately returned to his duty, which implied—the note found upon him will be remembered—a certain surveillance of the shore on the right bank of the Champs Elysées, which for some time had excited the attention of the police. There he had seen Thénardier, and had followed him. The rest is known.

It is understood also that the opening of that grating so obligingly before Jean Valjean was a piece of shrewdness on the part of Thénardier. Thénardier felt that Javert was still there; the man who is watched has a scent which does not deceive him; a bone must be thrown to this hound. An assassin what a godsend! It was the scapegoat, which must never be refused. Thénardier, by putting Jean Valjean out in his place, gave a victim to the police, threw them off his own track, caused himself to be forgotten in a larger matter, rewarded Javert for his delay, which always flatters a spy, gained thirty francs, and counted surely, as for himself, upon escaping by the aid of this diversion.

Jean Valjean had passed from one shoal to another.

These two encounters, blow on blow, to fall from Thénardier upon Javert, it was hard.

Javert did not recognise Jean Valjean, who, as we have said, no longer resembled himself. He did not unfold his arms, he secured his club in his grasp by an imperceptible movement, and said in a quick and calm voice:

"Who are you?"

"I."

"What you?"

"Jean Valjean."

Javert put the club between his teeth, bent his knees, inclined his body, laid his two powerful hands upon Jean Valjean's shoulders, which they clamped like two vices, examined him, and recognised him. Their faces almost touched. Javert's look was terrible.

Jean Valjean stood inert under the grasp of Javert like a lion who should submit to the claw of a lynx.

"Inspector Javert," said he, "you have got me. Besides, since this morning, I have considered myself your prisoner. I did not give you my address to try to escape you. Take me. Only grant me one thing."

Javert seemed not to hear. He rested his fixed eye upon Jean Valjean. His rising chin pushed his lips towards his nose, a sign of savage reverie. At last, he let go of Jean Valjean, rose up as straight as a stick, took his club firmly in his grasp, and, as if in a dream, murmured rather than pronounced this question:

"What are you doing here? and who is this man?"

Jean Valjean answered, and the sound of his voice appeared to awaken Javert:

"It is precisely of him that I wish to speak. Dispose of me as you please; but help me first to carry him home. I only ask that of you."

Javert's face contracted, as it happened to him whenever anybody seemed to consider him capable of a concession. Still he did not say no.

He stooped down again, took a handkerchief from his pocket, which he dipped in the water, and wiped Marius' bloodstained forehead.

"This man was in the barricade," said he in an undertone, and as if speaking to himself. "This is he whom they called Marius."

A spy of the first quality, who had observed everything, listened to everything, heard everything, and recollected everything, believing he was about to die; who spied even in his death-agony, and who, leaning upon the first step of the grave, had taken notes.

He seized Marius' hand, seeking for his pulse.

"He is wounded," said Jean Valjean.

"He is dead," said Javert.

Jean Valjean answered:

"No. Not yet."

"You have brought him, then, from the barricade here?" observed Javert.

His preoccupation must have been deep, as he did not dwell longer upon this perplexing escape through the sewer, and did not even notice Jean Valjean's silence after his question.

Jean Valjean, for his part, seemed to have but one idea. He resumed:

"He lives in the Marais, Rue des Filles du Calvaire, at his grandfather's—I forget the name."

Jean Valjean felt in Marius' coat, took out the pocket-book, opened it at the page pencilled by Marius, and handed it to Javert.

There was still enough light floating in the air to enable one to read. Javert, moreover, had in his eye the feline phosphorescence of the birds of the night. He deciphered the few lines written by Marius, and muttered: "Gillenormand, Rue des Filles du Calvaire, No. 6."

Then he cried: "Driver?"

A fiacre was waiting, in case of need.

Javert kept Marius' pocket-book.

A moment later, the carriage, descending by the slope of the watering-place, was on the beach. Marius was laid upon the back seat, and Javert sat down by the side of Jean Valjean on the front seat.

When the door was shut, the fiacre moved rapidly off, going up the quais in the direction of the Bastille.

They left the quais and entered the streets. The driver, a black silhouette upon his box, whipped up his bony horses. Icy silence in the coach. Marius, motionless, his body braced in the corner of the carriage, his head dropping down upon his breast, his arms hanging, his legs rigid, appeared to await nothing now but a coffin; Jean Valjean seemed made of shadow, and Javert of stone; and in that carriage full of night, the interior of which, whenever it passed before a lamp, appeared to turn lividly pale, as if from an intermittent flash, chance grouped together, and seemed dismally to confront the three tragic immobilities, the corpse, the spectre, and the statue.

RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON—OF HIS LIFE

At every jolt over the pavement, a drop of blood fell from Marius's hair.

It was after nightfall when the fiacre arrived at No. 6, in the Rue des Filles du Calvaire.

Javert first set foot to the ground, verified by a glance the number above the porte-cochère, and, lifting the heavy wrought-iron knocker, embellished in the old fashion, with a goat and a satyr defying each other, struck a violent blow. The fold of the door partly opened, and Javert pushed it. The porter showed himself, gaping and half-awake, a candle in his hand.

Everybody in the house was asleep. People go to bed early in the

Marais, especially on days of émeute. That good old quartier, startled by the Revolution, takes refuge in slumber, as children, when they hear Bugaboo coming, hide their heads very quickly under their coverlets.

Meanwhile Jean Valjean and the driver lifted Marius out of the coach, Jean Valjean supporting him by the armpits, and the coachman by the knees.

While he was carrying Marius in this way, Jean Valjean slipped his hand under his clothes, which were much torn, felt his breast, and assured himself that the heart still beat. It beat even a little less feebly, as if the motion of the carriage had determined a certain renewal of life.

Javert called out to the porter in the tone which befits the government, in presence of the porter of a factious man.

"Somebody whose name is Gillenormand?"

"It is here. What do you want with him?"

"His son is brought home."

"His son?" said the porter with amazement.

"He is dead."

Jean Valjean, who came ragged and dirty, behind Javert, and whom the porter beheld with some horror, motioned to him with his head that he was not.

The porter did not appear to understand either Javert's words, or Jean Valjean's signs.

Javert continued:

"He has been to the barricade, and here he is."

"To the barricade!" exclaimed the porter.

"He has got himself killed. Go and wake his father."

The porter did not stir.

"Why don't you go?" resumed Javert.

And he added:

"There will be a funeral here to-morrow."

With Javert, the common incidents of the highways were classed categorically, which is the foundation of prudence and vigilance, and each contingency had its compartment; the possible facts were in some sort in the drawers, whence they came out, on occasion, in variable quantities; there were, in the street, riot, émeute, carnival, funeral.

The porter merely woke Basque, the valet. Basque woke Nicolette, the servant; Nicolette woke Aunt Gillenormand. As to the grandfather, they let him sleep, thinking that he would know it soon enough at all events.

They carried Marius up to the first story, without anybody, moreover, perceiving it in the other portions of the house, and they laid him on an old couch in M. Gillenormand's antechamber; and, while Basque went for a doctor and Nicolette was opening the linen closets, Jean Valjean felt Javert touch him on the shoulder. He understood, and went down stairs, having behind him Javert's following steps.

The porter saw them depart as he had seen them arrive, with drowsy dismay.

They got into the fiacre again, and the driver mounted upon his box.

"Inspector Javert," said Jean Valjean, "grant me one thing more."

"What?" asked Javert roughly.

"Let me go home a moment. Then you shall do with me what you will."

Javert remained silent for a few seconds, his chin drawn back into the collar of his overcoat, then he let down the window in front.

"Driver," said he, "Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7."

COMMOTION IN THE ABSOLUTE

THEY did not open their mouths again for the whole distance.

What did Jean Valjean desire? To finish what he had begun; to inform Cosette, to tell her where Marius was, to give her perhaps some other useful information, to make, if he could, certain final dispositions. As to himself, as to what concerned him personally, it was all over; he had been seized by Javert and did not resist; another than he, in such a condition, would perhaps have thought vaguely of that rope which Thénardier had given him and of the bars of the first cell which he should enter; but, since the bishop, there had been in Jean Valjean, in view of any violent attempt, were it even upon his own life, let us repeat, a deep religious hesitation.

Suicide, that mysterious assault upon the unknown, which may contain, in a certain measure, the death of the soul, was impossible to Jean Valjean.

At the entrance of the Rue de l'Homme Armé, the fiacre stopped, this street being too narrow for carriages to enter. Javert and Jean Valjean got out.

The driver humbly represented to monsieur the inspector that the Utrecht velvet of his carriage was all stained with the blood of the assassinated man and the mud of the assassin. That was what he had understood. He added that indemnity was due him. At the same time, taking his little book from his pocket, he begged monsieur the inspector to have the goodness to write him "a little scrap of certificate as to what."

Javert took four napoleons from his pocket and dismissed the fiacre.

Jean Valjean thought that Javert's intention was to take him on foot to the post of the Blancs-Manteaux or to the post of the Archives which are quite near by.

They entered the street. It was, as usual, empty. Javert followed Jean Valjean. They reached No. 7. Jean Valjean rapped. The door opened.

"Very well," said Javert. "Go up."

He added with a strange expression and as if he were making an effort in speaking in such a way:

"I will wait here for you."

Jean Valjean looked at Javert. This manner of proceeding was little in accordance with Javert's habits. Still, that Javert should now have a sort of haughty confidence in him, the confidence of the cat which grants the mouse the liberty of the length of her claw, resolved as Jean Valjean was to deliver himself up and make an end of it, could not surprise him very much. He opened the door, went into the house, cried to the porter who was in bed and who had drawn the cord without getting up: "It is I!" and mounted the stairs.

On reaching the first story, he paused. All painful paths have their halting-places. The window on the landing, which was a sliding window, was open. As in many old houses, the stairway admitted the light, and had a view upon the street. The street lamp, which stood exactly opposite, threw some rays upon the stairs, which produced an economy in light.

Jean Valjean, either to take breath or mechanically, looked out of this window. He leaned over the street. It is short, and the lamp lighted it from one end to the other. Jean Valjean was bewildered with amazement; there was nobody there.

Javert was gone.

THE GRANDFATHER

Basque and the porter had carried Marius into the parlour, still stretched motionless upon the couch on which he had been first laid. The doctor, who had been sent for, had arrived. Aunt Gillenormand had got up.

On the doctor's order, a cot-bed had been set up near the couch. The doctor examined Marius, and, after having determined that the pulse still beat, that the sufferer had no wound penetrating his breast, and that the blood at the corners of his mouth came from the nasal cavities, he had him laid flat upon the bed, without a pillow, his head on a level with his body, and even a little lower, with his chest bare, in order to facilitate respiration. Mademoiselle Gillenormand, seeing that they were taking off Marius' clothes, withdrew. She began to tell her beads in her room.

The body had not received any interior lesion; a ball, deadened by the pocket-book, had turned aside, and made the tour of the ribs with a hideous gash, but not deep, and consequently not dangerous. The long walk underground had completed the dislocation of the broken shoulder-blade, and there were serious difficulties there. There were sword cuts on the arms. No scar disfigured his face; the head, however, was as it were covered with hacks; what would be the result of these wounds on the head? did they stop at the scalp? did they affect the skull? That could not yet be told. A serious symptom was, that they had caused the fainting, and men do not always wake from such faintings. The hæmorrhage, moreover, had exhausted the wounded man. From the waist, the lower part of the body had been protected by the barricade.

Basque and Nicolette tore up linen and made bandages; Nicolette sewed them, Basque folded them. There being no lint, the doctor stopped the flow of blood from the wounds temporarily with rolls of wadding. By the side of the bed, three candles were burning on a table upon which the surgical instruments were spread out. The doctor washed Marius' face and hair with cold water. A bucketful was red in a moment. The porter, candle in hand, stood by.

The physician seemed reflecting sadly. From time to time he shook his head, as if he were answering some question which he had put himself internally. A bad sign for the patient, these mysterious dialogues of the physician with himself.

At the moment the doctor was wiping the face and touching the still closed eyelids lightly with his finger, a door opened at the rear end of the parlour, and a long, pale figure approached.

It was the grandfather.

The émeute, for two days, had very much agitated, exasperated, and absorbed M. Gillenormand. He had not slept during the preceding night, and he had had a fever all day. At night, he had gone to bed very early, recommending that everything in the house be bolted, and, from fatigue, he had fallen asleep.

The slumbers of old men are easily broken; M. Gillenormand's room was next the parlour, and, in spite of the precautions they had taken, the noise had awakened him. Surprised by the light which he saw at the crack of his door, he had got out of bed, and groped his way along.

He was on the threshold, one hand on the knob of the half-opened door, his head bent a little forward and shaking, his body wrapped in a white nightgown, straight and without folds like a shroud; he was astounded; and he had the appearance of a phantom who is looking into a tomb.

He perceived the bed, and on the mattress that bleeding young man, white with a waxy whiteness, his eyes closed, his mouth open, his lips pallid, naked to the waist, gashed everywhere with red wounds, motionless, brightly lighted.

The grandfather had, from head to foot, as much of a shiver as ossified limbs can have; his eyes, the corner of which had become yellow from his great age, were veiled with a sort of glassy haze; his whole face assumed in an instant the cadaverous angles of a skeleton head, his arms fell pendent as if a spring were broken in them, and his stupefied astonishment was expressed by the separation of the fingers of his aged tremulous hands; his knees bent forward, showing through the opening of his nightgown his poor naked legs bristling with white hairs, and he murmured:

"Marius!"

"Monsieur," said Basque, "monsieur has just been brought home. He has been to the barricade, and——"

"He is dead!" cried the old man in a terrible voice. "Oh! the brigand."

Then a sort of sepulchral transfiguration made this centenarian as straight as a young man.

"Monsieur," said he, "you are the doctor. Come, tell me one thing. He is dead, isn't he?"

The physician, in the height of anxiety, kept silence.

M. Gillenormand wrung his hands with a terrific burst of laughter.

"He is dead! he is dead! He has got killed at the barricades! in hatred of me! It is against me that he did this! Ah, the blood-drinker! This is the way he comes back to me! Misery of my life, he is dead!"

He went to a window, opened it wide as if he were stifling, and, standing before the shadow, he began to talk into the street to the night:

"Pierced, sabred, slaughtered, exterminated, slashed, cut in pieces! do you see that, the vagabond! He knew very well that I was waiting for him, and that I had had his room arranged for him, and that I had had his portrait of the time when he was a little boy hung at the head of my bed! He knew very well that he had only to come back, and that for years I had been calling him, and that I sat at night in my chimney corner, with my hands on my knees not knowing what to do, and that I was a fool for his sake! You knew it very well, that you had only to come in and say: 'It is I,' and that you would be the master of the house, and that I would obey you, and that you would do whatever you liked with your old booby of a grandfather. You knew it very well, and you said: 'No, he is a royalist; I won't go!' And you went to the barricades, and you got yourself killed, out of spite! to revenge yourself for what I said to you about Monsieur the Duke de Berry! That is infamous! Go to bed, then, and sleep quietly! He is dead! That is my waking."

The physician, who began to be anxious on two accounts, left Marius a moment, and went to M. Gillenormand and took his arm. The grandfather turned round, looked at him with eyes which seemed swollen and bloody, and said quietly:

"Monsieur, I thank you. I am calm, I am a man, I saw the death of Louis XVI., I know how to bear up under events. There is one thing which is terrible, to think that it is your newspapers that do all the harm. You will have scribblers, talkers, lawyers, orators, tribunes, discussions, progress, lights, rights of man, freedom of the press, and this is the way they bring home your children for you. Oh! Marius! it is abominable! Killed! dead before me.

He approached Marius, who was still livid and motionless, and to whom the physician had returned, and he began to wring his hands. The old man's white lips moved as if mechanically, and made way for almost indistinct words, like whispers in a death-rattle, which could scarcely be heard: "Oh! heartless! Oh! clubbist! Oh! scoundrel! Oh! Septembrist!" Reproaches whispered by a dying man to a corpse.

At this moment, Marius slowly raised his lids, and his gaze, still veiled in the astonishment of lethargy, rested upon M. Gillenormand.

"Marius!" cried the old man. "Marius! my darling Marius! my child! my dear son! You are opening your eyes, your are looking at me, you are alive, thanks!"

And he fell fainting.

BOOK III—JAVERT OFF THE TRACK

JAVERT OFF THE TRACK

Javert made his way with slow steps from the Rue de l'Homme Armé.

He walked with his head down, for the first time in his life, and, for the first time in his life as well, with his hands behind his back.

Until that day, Javert had taken, of the two attitudes of Napoleon, only that which expresses resolution, the arms folded upon the breast; that which expresses uncertainty, the hands behind the back, was unknown to him. Now, a change had taken place; his whole person, slow and gloomy, bore the impress of anxiety.

He plunged into the silent streets.

Still he followed one direction.

He took the shortest route towards the Seine, reached the Quai des Ormes, went along the quai, passed the Grève, and stopped, at a little distance from the post of the Place du Châtelet, at the corner of the Pont Notre Dame. The Seine there forms between the Pont Notre Dame and the Pont au Change in one direction, and in the other between the Quai de la Mégisserie and the Quai aux Fleurs, a sort of square lake crossed by a rapid.

This point of the Seine is dreaded by mariners. Nothing is more dangerous than this rapid, narrowed at that period and vexed by the piles of the mill of the bridge, since removed. The two bridges, so near each other, increase the danger, the water hurrying fearfully under the arches. It rolls on with broad, terrible folds; it gathers and heaps up; the flood strains at the piles of the bridge as if to tear them out with huge liquid ropes. Men who fall in there, one never sees again; the best swimmers are drowned.

Javert leaned both elbows on the parapet, with his chin in his hands, and while his fingers were clenched mechanically in the thickest of his whiskers, he reflected.

There had been a new thing, a revolution, a catastrophe in the depths of his being; and there was matter for self-examination.

Javert was suffering frightfully.

For some hours Javert had ceased to be natural. He was troubled; this brain, so limpid in its blindness, had lost its transparency; there was a cloud in this crystal. Javert felt that duty was growing weaker in his conscience, and he could not hide it from himself. When he had so unexpectedly met Jean Valjean upon the beach of the Seine, there had been in him something of the wolf which seizes his prey again, and of the dog which again finds his master.

He saw before him two roads, both equally straight; but he saw two; and that terrified him—him, who had never in his life known but one straight line. And, bitter anguish, these two roads were contradictory. One of these two straight lines excluded the other. Which of the two was the true one?

His condition was inexpressible.

To owe life to a malefactor, to accept that debt and to pay it, to be, in spite of himself, on a level with a fugitive from justice, and to pay him for one service with another service; to allow him to say: "Go away," and to say to him in turn: "Be free;" to sacrifice duty, that general obligation, to personal motives, and to feel in these personal motives something general also, and perhaps superior; to betray society in order to be true to his own conscience; that all these absurdities should be realised and that they should be accumulated upon himself, this it was by which he was prostrated.

One thing had astonished him, that Jean Valjean had spared him, and one thing had petrified him, that he, Javert, had spared Jean Valjean.

Where was he? He sought himself and found himself no longer.

What should he do now? Give up Jean Valjean, that was wrong; leave Jean Valjean free, that was wrong. In the first case, the man of authority would fall lower than the man of the galley; in the second, a convict rose higher than the law and set his foot upon it. In both cases, dishonour to him, Javert. In every course which was open to him, there was a fall. Destiny has certain extremities precipitous upon the impossible, and beyond which life is no more than an abyss. Javert was at one of these extremities.

Unnatural state, if ever there was one. There were only two ways to get out of it. One, to go resolutely to Jean Valjean, and to return the man to the galleys to the dungeon. The other——

Javert left the parapet, and, his head erect this time, made his way with a firm step towards the post indicated by a lamp at one of the corners of the Place du Châtelet.

On reaching it, he saw a sergent de ville through the window, and he entered. Merely from the manner in which they push open the door of a guard-house, policemen recognise each other. Javert gave his name, showed his card to the sergent, and sat down at the table of the post, on which a candle was burning. There was a pen on the table, a leaden inkstand, and some paper in readiness for chance reports and the orders of the night patrol.

This table, always accompanied by its straw chair, is an institution; it exists in all the police posts; it is invariably adorned with a box-wood saucer, full of saw-dust, and a pasteboard box, full of red wafers, and it is the lower stage of the official style. On it the literature of the state begins.

Javert took the pen and a sheet of paper, and began to write.

He wrote in his calmest and most correct handwriting, not omitting a dot, and making the paper squeak resolutely under his pen. Beneath the last line he signed:

"JAVERT,
"Inspector of the 1st class.
"At the Post of the Place du Châtelet.
"June 7, 1832, about one o'clock in the morning."

Javert dried the fresh ink of the paper, folded it like a letter, sealed it, wrote on the back: *Note for the administration,* left it on the table, and went out of the post. The glazed and grated door closed behind him.

He again crossed the Place du Châtelet diagonally, regained the quai, and returned with automatic precision to the very point which he had left a quarter of an hour before, he leaned over there, and found himself again in the same attitude, on the same stone of the parapet. It seemed as if he had not stirred.

The darkness was complete. It was the sepulchral moment which follows midnight. A ceiling of clouds concealed the stars. The sky was only an ominous depth. The houses in the city no longer showed a single light; nobody was passing; all that he could see of the streets and the quais was deserted; Notre Dame and the towers of the Palais de Justice seemed like features of the night. A lamp reddened the curb of the quai. The silhouettes of the bridges were distorted in the mist, one behind the other. The rains had swelled the river.

The place where Javert was leaning was, it will be remembered, situated exactly over the rapids of the Seine perpendicularly over that formidable whirlpool which knots and unknots itself like an endless screw.

Javert bent his head and looked. All was black. He could distinguish nothing. He heard a frothing sound; but he did not see the river. At intervals, in that giddy depth, a gleam appeared in dim serpentine contortions, the water having this power, in the most complete night, of taking light, nobody knows whence, and changing it into an adder. The gleam vanished, and all became again indistinct. Immensity seemed open there. What was beneath was not water, it was chasm. The wall of the quai, abrupt, confused, mingled with vapour, suddenly lost to sight, seemed like an escarpment of the infinite.

He saw nothing, but he perceived the hostile chill of the water, and the insipid odour of the moist stones. A fierce breath rose from that abyss. The swollen river guessed at rather than perceived, the tragical whispering of the flood, the dismal vastness of the arches of the bridge, the imaginable fall into that gloomy void, all that shadow was full of horror.

Javert remained for some minutes motionless, gazing into that opening of darkness; he contemplated the invisible with a fixedness which resembled attention. The water gurgled. Suddenly he took off his hat and laid it on the edge of the quai. A moment afterwards, a tall and black form, which from the distance some belated passer might have taken for a phantom, appeared standing on the parapet, bent towards the Seine, then sprang up, and fell straight into the darkness; there was a dull splash; and the shadow alone was in the secret of the convulsions of that obscure form which had disappeared under the water.

BOOK IV—THE GRANDSON AND THE GRANDFATHER

MARIUS, ESCAPING FROM CIVIL WAR, PREPARES FOR DOMESTIC WAR

Marius was for a long time neither dead nor alive. He had for several weeks a fever accompanied with delirium, and serious cerebral symptoms resulting rather from the concussion produced by the wounds in the head than from the wounds themselves.

He repeated the name of Cosette during entire nights in the dismal loquacity of fever and with the gloomy obstinacy of agony. The size of certain gashes was a serious danger, the suppuration of large wounds always being liable to reabsorption, and consequently to kill the patient, under certain atmospheric influences; at every change in the weather, at the slightest storm, the physician was anxious, "Above all, let the wounded man have no excitement," he repeated. The dressings were complicated and difficult, the fastening of cloths and bandages with sparadrap not being invented at that period. Nicolette used for lint a sheet "as big as a ceiling," said she. It was not without difficulty that the chloruretted lotions and the nitrate of silver brought the gangrene to an end. As long as there was danger, M. Gillenormand, in despair at the bedside of his grandson, was, like Marius, neither dead nor alive.

Every day, and sometimes twice a day, a very well dressed gentleman with white hair, such was the description given by the porter, came to inquire after the wounded man, and left a large package of lint for the dressings.

At last, on the 7th of September, four months, to a day, after the sorrowful night when they had brought him home dying to his grandfather, the physician declared him out of danger. Convalescence began. Marius was, however, obliged still to remain for more than two months stretched on a long chair, on account of the accidents resulting from the fracture of the shoulder-blade. There is always a last wound like this which will not close, and which prolongs the dressings, to the great disgust of the patient.

However, this long sickness and this long convalescence saved him from pursuit. In France, there is no anger, even governmental, which six months does not extinguish. Émeutes, in the present state of society, are so much the fault of everybody that they are followed by a certain necessity of closing the eyes.

Let us add that the infamous Gisquet order, which enjoined physicians to inform against the wounded, having outraged public opinion, and not only public opinion, but the king first of all, the wounded were shielded and protected by this indignation; and, with the exception of those who had been taken prisoners in actual combat, the courts-martial dared not disturb any. Marius was therefore left in peace.

M. Gillenormand passed first through every anguish, and then every ecstasy. They had great difficulty in preventing him from passing every night with the wounded man; he had his large armchair brought to the side of Marius' bed; he insisted that his daughter should take the finest linen in the house for compresses and bandages. Mademoiselle Gillenormand, like a prudent and elder person, found means to spare the fine linen, while she left the grandfather to suppose that he was obeyed. M. Gillenormand did not permit anybody to explain to him that for making lint cambric is not so good as coarse linen, nor new linen so good as old. He superintended all the dressings, from which Mademoiselle Gillenormand modestly absented herself. When the dead flesh was cut with scissors, he would say: *"aïe! aïe!"* Nothing was so touching as to see him hand a cup of gruel to the wounded man with his gentle senile trembling. He overwhelmed the doctor with questions. He did not perceive that he always asked the same.

On the day the physician announced to him that Marius was out of danger, the goodman was in delirium. He gave his porter three louis as a gratuity.

Then he knelt upon a chair, and Basque, who watched him through the half-open door, was certain that he was praying.

Hitherto, he had hardly believed in God.

At each new phase of improvement, which continued to grow more visible, the grandfather raved. He did a thousand mirthful things mechanically; he ran up and down stairs without knowing why. A neighbour, a pretty woman withal, was amazed at receiving a large bouquet one morning; it was M. Gillenormand who sent it to her. The husband made a scene. M. Gillenormand attempted to take Nicolette upon his knees. He called Marius Monsieur the Baron.

He cried, *"Vive la République!"*

At every moment, he asked the physician: "There is no more danger, is there!" He looked at Marius with a grandmother's eyes. He brooded him when he ate. He no longer knew himself, he no longer counted on himself. Marius was the master of the house, there was abdication in his joy, he was the grandson of his grandson.

In this lightness of heart which possessed him, he was the most venerable of children. For fear of fatiguing or annoying the convalescent, he got behind him to smile upon him. He was contented, joyous, enraptured, delightful, young. His white hairs added a sweet majesty to the cheerful light upon his face. When grace is joined with wrinkles, it is adorable. There is an unspeakable dawn in happy old age.

As for Marius, while he let them dress his wounds and care for him, he had one fixed idea: Cosette.

Since the fever and the delirium had left him, he had not uttered that name, and they might have supposed that he no longer thought of it. He held his peace, precisely because his soul was in it.

He did not know what had become of Cosette; the whole affair of the Rue de la Chanvrerie was like a cloud in his memory; shadows, almost indistinct, were floating in his mind, Eponine, Gavroche, Mabeuf, the Thénardiers, all his friends mingled drearily with the smoke of the barricade; the strange passage of M. Fauchelevent in that bloody drama produced upon him the effect of an enigma in a tempest; he understood nothing in regard to his own life; he neither knew how, nor by whom, he had been saved, and nobody about him knew; all that they could tell him was that he had been brought to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire in a fiacre by night; past, present, future, all was now to him but the mist of a vague idea; but there was within this mist an immovable point, one clear and precise feature, something which was granite, a resolution, a will: to find Cosette again. To him the idea of life was not distinct from the idea of Cosette; he had decreed in his heart that he would not accept the one without the other, and he was unalterably determined to demand from anybody, no matter whom, who should wish to compel him to live, from his grandfather, from Fate, from Hell, the restitution of his vanished Eden.

MADEMOISELLE GILLENORMAND AT LAST THINKS IT NOT IMPROPER THAT MONSIEUR FAUCHELEVENT SHOULD COME IN WITH SOMETHING UNDER HIS ARM

And then, one day when Marius had somewhat recovered his strength, came this well dressed white-haired gentleman, this time not alone. And thus Cosette and Marius saw each other again.

What the interview was, we will not attempt to tell. There are things which we should not undertake to paint; the sun is of the number.

The whole family, including Basque and Nicolette, were assembled in Marius' room when Cosette entered.

She appeared on the threshold; it seemed as if she were in a cloud.

Just at that instant the grandfather was about to blow his nose; he stopped short, holding his nose in his handkerchief, and looking at Cosette above it:

"Adorable!" he exclaimed.

Then he blew his nose with a loud noise.

Cosette was intoxicated, enraptured, startled, in Heaven. She was as frightened as one can be by happiness. She stammered, quite pale, quite red, wishing to throw herself into Marius' arms, and not daring to. Ashamed to show her love before all those people. We are pitiless towards happy lovers; we stay there when they have the strongest desire to be alone. They, however, have no need at all of society.

With Cosette and behind her had entered a man with white hair, grave, smiling nevertheless, but with a vague and poignant smile. This was "Monsieur Fauchelevent;" this was Jean Valjean.

He was *very well dressed,* as the porter had said, in a new black suit, with a white cravat.

The porter was a thousand miles from recognising in this correct bourgeois, in this probable notary, the frightful corpse-bearer who had landed at his door on the night of the 7th of June, ragged, muddy, hideous, haggard, his face masked by blood and dirt, supporting the fainting Marius in his arms; still his porter's scent was awakened. When M. Fauchelevent had arrived with Cosette, the porter could not help confiding this remark to his wife: "I don't know why I always imagine that I have seen that face somewhere."

Monsieur Fauchelevent, in Marius' room, stayed near the door, as if apart. He had under his arm a package similar in appearance to an octavo volume, wrapped in paper. The paper of the envelope was greenish, and seemed mouldy.

"Does this gentleman always have books under his arm like that?" asked Mademoiselle Gillenormand, who did not like books, in a low voice to Nicolette.

"Well," answered M. Gillenormand, who had heard her, in the same tone, "he is scholar. When then? is it his fault? Monsieur

Boulard, whom I knew, never went out without a book, he neither, and always had an old volume against his heart, like that."

And bowing, he said, in a loud voice:

"Monsieur Tranchelevent——"

Father Gillenormand did not do this on purpose, but inattention to proper names was an aristocratic way he had.

"Monsieur Tranchelevent, I have the honour of asking of you for my grandson, Monsieur Baron Marius Pontmercy, the hand of mademoiselle."

Monsieur Tranchelevent bowed.

"It is done," said the grandfather.

And, turning towards Marius and Cosette, with arms extended and blessing, he cried:

"Permission to adore each other."

They did not make him say it twice. It was all the same! The cooing began. They talked low, Marius leaning on his long chair, Cosette standing near him. "Oh my God!" murmured Cosette, "I see you again! It is you! it is you! To have gone to fight like that! But why? It is horrible. For four months I have been dead. Oh, how naughty it is to have been in that battle! What had I done to you? I pardon you, but you won't do it again. Just now, when they came to tell us to come, I thought again I should die, but it was of joy. I was so sad! I did not take time to dress myself; I must look like a fright. What will your relatives say of me, to see me with a collar ragged? But speak now! You let me do all the talking. We are still in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. Your shoulder, that was terrible. They told me they could put their fist into it. And then they have cut your flesh with scissors. That is frightful. I have cried; I have no eyes left. It is strange that anybody can suffer like that. Your grandfather has a very kind appearance. Don't disturb yourself; don't rest on your elbow; take care, you will hurt yourself. Oh, how happy I am! So our trouble is all over! I am very silly. I wanted to say something to you that I have forgotten completely. Do you love me still? We live in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. There is no garden. I have been making lint all the time. Here, monsieur, look, it is your fault, my fingers are callous." "Angel!" said Marius.

Angel is the only word in the language which cannot be worn out.

No other word would resist the pitiless use which lovers make of it.

Then, as there were spectators, they stopped, and did not say another word, contenting themselves with touching each other's hands very gently.

M. Gillenormand turned towards all those who were in the room and cried:

"Why don't you talk loud, the rest of you? Make a noise, behind the scenes. Come, a little uproar, the devil! so that these children can chatter at their ease."

And, approaching Marius and Cosette, he said to them very low:

"Make love. Don't be disturbed."

He remained silent a moment and added:

"She is exquisite, this darling. She is a masterpiece, this Cosette! She is a very little girl and a very great lady. She will be only a baroness, that is stooping; she was born a marchioness. Hasn't she lashes for you? My children, fix it well in your noddles that you are in the right of it. Love one another. Be foolish about it. Love is the foolishness of men, and the wisdom of God. Adore each other. Only," added he, suddenly darkening, "what a misfortune! This is what I am thinking of! More than half of what I have is in annuity; as long as I live, it's all well enough, but after my death, twenty years from now, ah! my poor children, you will not have a sou. Your beautiful white hands, Madame the Baroness, will do the devil the honour to pull him by the tail."

Here a grave and tranquil voice was heard, which said:

"Mademoiselle Euphrasie Fauchelevent has six hundred thousand francs."

It was Jean Valjean's voice.

He had not yet uttered a word, nobody seemed even to remember that he was there, and he stood erect and motionless behind all these happy people.

"How is Mademoiselle Euphrasie in question?" asked the grandfather, startled.

"That is me," answered Cosette.

"Six hundred thousand francs!" resumed M. Gillenormand.

"Less fourteen or fifteen thousand francs, perhaps," said Jean Valjean.

And he laid on the table the package which Aunt Gillenormand had taken for a book.

Jean Valjean opened the package himself; it was a bundle of bank-notes. They ran through them, and they counted them. There were five hundred bills of a thousand francs, and a hundred and sixty-eight of five hundred. In all, five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs.

"That is a good book," said M. Gillenormand.

"Five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs!" murmured the aunt.

"This arranges things very well, does it not, Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder?" resumed the grandfather. "This devil of a Marius, he has found you a grisette millionaire on the tree of dreams! Then trust in the love-making of young folks nowadays! Students find studentesses with six hundred thousand francs. Chérubin works better than Rothschild."

"Five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs!" repeated Mademoiselle Gillenormand in an undertone. "Five hundred and eighty-four! you might call it six hundred thousand, indeed!"

As for Marius and Cosette, they were looking at each other during this time; they paid little attention to this incident.

DEPOSIT YOUR MONEY RATHER IN SOME FOREST THAN WITH SOME NOTARY

The reader has doubtless understood, without it being necessary to explain at length, that Jean Valjean, after the Champmathieu affair, had been able, thanks to his first escape for a few days, to come to Paris, and to withdraw the sum made by him, under the name of Monsieur Madeleine, at M—— sur M——, from Laffitte's in time; and that, in the fear of being retaken, which happened to him, in fact, a short time after, he had concealed and buried that sum in the forest of Montfermeil, in the place called the Blaru grounds. The sum, six hundred and thirty thousand francs, all in bank-notes, was of small bulk, and was contained in a box; but, to preserve the box from moisture he had placed it in an oaken chest, full of chestnut shavings. In the same chest, he had put his other treasure, the bishop's candlesticks. He had carried away these candlesticks when he escaped from

M—— sur M——. Afterwards, whenever Jean Valjean was in need of money, he went to the Blaru glade for it. Hence the absences of which we have spoken. He had a pickaxe somewhere in the bushes, in a hiding-place known only to himself. When he saw Marius convalescent, feeling that the hour was approaching when this money might be useful, he had gone after it.

The real sum was five hundred and eighty-four thousand five hundred francs. Jean Valjean took out the five hundred francs for himself. "We will see afterwards," thought he.

The difference between this sum and the six hundred and thirty thousand francs withdrawn from Laffitte's represented the expenses of ten years, from 1823 to 1833. The five years spent in the convent had cost only five thousand francs.

Jean Valjean put the two silver candlesticks upon the mantel, where they shone.

Moreover, Jean Valjean knew that he was delivered from Javert. It had been mentioned in his presence, and he had verified the fact in the *Moniteur,* which published it, that an inspector of police, named Javert, had been found drowned under a washerwoman's boat between the Pont au Change and Pont Neuf, and that a paper left by this man, otherwise irreproachable and highly esteemed by his chiefs, led to a belief that he had committed suicide during a fit of mental aberration. "In fact," thought Jean Valjean, "since having me in his power, he let me go, he must already have been crazy."

THE TWO OLD MEN DO EVERYTHING, EACH IN HIS OWN WAY, THAT COSETTE MAY BE HAPPY

All the preparations were made for the marriage. The physician being consulted said that it might take place in February. This was in December. Some ravishing weeks of perfect happiness rolled away.

The least happy was not the grandfather. He would remain for a quarter of an hour at a time gazing at Cosette.

"The wonderful pretty girl!" he exclaimed. "And her manners are so sweet and so good. It is of no use to say my love, my heart, she is the most charming girl that I have seen in my life. Besides, she will have virtues for you sweet as violets. She is a grace, indeed! You can but live nobly with such a creature. Marius, my boy, you are a baron, you are rich, don't pettifog, I beg of you."

Cosette and Marius had passed abruptly from the grave to paradise. There had been but little caution in the transition, and they would have been stunned if they had not been dazzled.

"Do you understand anything about it?" said Marius to Cosette.

"No," answered Cosette, "but it seems to me that the good God is caring for us."

Jean Valjean did all, smoothed all, conciliated all, made all easy. He hastened towards Cosette's happiness with as much eagerness, and apparently as much joy, as Cosette herself.

As he had been a mayor, he knew how to solve a delicate problem, in the secret of which he was alone: Cosette's civil state. To bluntly give her origin, who knows? that might prevent the marriage. He drew Cosette out of all difficulty. He arranged a family of dead people for her, a sure means of incurring no objection. Cosette was what remained of an extinct family; Cosette was not his daughter, but the daughter of another Fauchelevent. Two brothers Fauchelevent had been gardeners at the convent of the Petit Picpus. They went to this convent, the best recommendations and the most respectable testimonials abounded; the good nuns, little apt and little inclined to fathom questions of paternity, and understanding no malice, had never known very exactly of which of the two Fauchelevents little Cosette was the daughter. They said what was wanted of them, and said it with zeal. A notary's act was drawn up. Cosette became before the law Mademoiselle Euphrasie Fauchelevent. She was declared an orphan. Jean Valjean arranged matters in such a way as to be designated, under the name of Fauchelevent as Cosette's guardian, with M. Gillenormand as overseeing guardian.

Cosette learned that she was not the daughter of that old man whom she had so long called father. He was only a relative; another Fauchelevent was her real father. At any other time, this would have broken her heart. But at this ineffable hour, it was only a little shadow, a darkening, and she had so much joy that this cloud was of short duration. She had Marius. The young man came, the goodman faded away; such is life.

It was arranged that the couple should live with the grandfather.

M. Gillenormand absolutely insisted upon giving them his room, the finest in the house. *"It will rejuvenate me,"* he declared. *"It is an old project. I always had the idea of making a wedding in my room."* He filled this room with a profusion of gay old furniture. He hung the walls and the ceiling with an extraordinary stuff which he had in the piece, and which he believed to be from Utrecht, a satin background with golden immortelles, and velvet auriculas. "With this stuff," said he, "the Duchess d'Anville's bed was draped at La Roche Guyon." He put a little Saxony figure on the mantel, holding a muff over her naked belly.

M. Gillenormand's library became the attorney's office which Marius required; an office being rendered necessary by the rules of the order.

TWO MEN IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND

The enchantment, great as it was, did not efface other preoccupations from Marius' mind.

During the preparations for the marriage, and while waiting for the time fixed upon, he had some difficult and careful retrospective researches made.

He had owed gratitude on several sides, he owed some on his father's account, he owed some on his own.

There was Thénardier; there was the unknown man who had brought him, Marius, to M. Gillenormand's.

Marius presisted in trying to find these two men, not intending to marry, to be happy, and to forget them, and fearing lest these debts of duty unpaid might cast a shadow over his life, so luminous henceforth. It was impossible for him to leave all these arrears unsettled behind him; and he wished, before entering joyously into the future, to have a quittance from the past.

That Thénardier was a scoundrel, took away nothing from this fact that he had saved Colonel Pontmercy. Thénardier was a bandit to everybody except Marius.

And Marius, ignorant of the real scene of the battle-field of Waterloo, did not know this peculiarity, that his father was, with reference to Thénardier, in this singular situation, that he owed his life to him without owing him any thanks.

None of the various agents whom Marius employed, succeeded in finding Thénardier's track. Effacement seemed complete on that side. The Thénardiess had died in prison pending the examination on the charge. Thénardier and his daughter Azelma, the two who alone remained of that woeful group, had plunged back into the shadow. The gulf of the social Unknown had silently closed over these beings. There could no longer even be seen on the surface that quivering, that trembling, those obscure concentric circles which announce that something has fallen there, and that we may cast in the lead.

As for the other, as for the unknown man who had saved Marius, the researches at first had some result, then stopped short. They succeeded in finding the fiacre which had brought Marius to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire on the evening of the 6th of June. The driver declared that on the 6th of June, by order of a police officer, he had been "stationed" from three o'clock in the afternoon until night, on the quai of the Champs Elysées, above the outlet of the Grand Sewer; that, about nine o'clock in the evening, the grating of the sewer, which overlooks the river beach, was opened; that a man came out, carrying another man on his shoulders, who seemed to be dead; that the officer, who was watching at that point, arrested the living man, and seized the dead man; that, on the order of the officer, he, the driver, received "all those people" into the fiacre; that they went first to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire; that they left the dead man there; that the dead man was Monsieur Marius, and that he, the driver, recognised him plainly, although he was alive "this time;" that they then got into his carriage again; that he whipped up his horses; that, within a few steps of the door of the Archives, he had been called to stop; that there, in the street, he had been paid and left, and that the officer took away the other man; that he knew nothing more, that the night was very dark.

Marius, we have said, recollected nothing. He merely remembered having been seized from behind by a vigorous hand at the moment he fell backwards into the barricades, then all became a blank to him. He had recovered consciousness only at M. Gillenormand's.

Everything, in this strange enigma, was inexplicable.

This man, this mysterious man, whom the driver had seen come out of the grating of the Grand Sewer bearing Marius senseless upon his back, and whom the police officer on the watch had arrested in the very act of saving an insurgent, what had become of him? what had become of the officer himself? Why had this officer kept silence? had the man succeeded in escaping? had he bribed the officer? Why did this man give no sign of life to Marius, who owed everything to him? His disinterestedness was not less wonderful than his devotion. Why did not this man reappear? Perhaps he was above recompense, but nobody is above gratitude. Was he dead? what kind of a man was this? how did he look? Nobody could tell. The driver answered: "The night was very dark." Basque and Nicolette, in their amazement, had only looked at their young master covered with blood. The porter, whose candle had lighted the tragic arrival of Marius, alone had noticed the man in question, and this is the description which he gave to him: "This man was horrible."

In the hope of deriving aid in his researches from them, Marius had had preserved the bloody clothes which he wore when he was brought back to his grandfather's. On examining the coat, it was noticed that one skirt was oddly torn. A piece was missing.

One evening Marius, spoke, before Cosette and Jean Valjean, of all this singular adventure, of the numberless inquiries which he had made, and of the uselessness of his efforts. The cold countenance of "Monsieur Fauchelevent" made him impatient. He exclaimed with a vivacity which had almost the vibration of anger:

"Yes, that man, whoever he may be, was sublime. Do you know what he did, monsieur? He intervened like the archangel. He must have thrown himself into the midst of the combat, have snatched me out of it, have opened the sewer, have drawn me into it, have borne me through it! He must have made his way for more than four miles through hideous subterranean galleries, but, stopping, in the darkness, in the cloaca, more than four miles, monsieur, with a corpse upon his back! And with what object? With the single object of saving that corpse. And that corpse was I. He said himself: 'There is perhaps a glimmer of life still there; I will risk my own life for that miserable spark!' And his life, he did not risk it, once, but twenty times! And each step was a danger. The proof is, that on coming out of the sewer he was arrested. Do you know, monsieur, that that man did all that? And he could expect no recompense. What was I? An insurgent. What was I? A vanquished man. Oh! if Cosette's six hundred thousand francs were mine——"

"They are yours," interrupted Jean Valjean.

"Well," resumed Marius, "I would give them to find that man!"

Jean Valjean kept silence.

BOOK V—THE WHITE NIGHT

THE 16TH OF FEBRUARY, 1833

The night of the 16th of February, 1833, was a blessed night. Above its shade the heavens were opened. It was the wedding night of Marius and Cosette.

The day had been adorable.

It had not been the sky-blue festival dreamed by the grandfather, a fairy scene with a confusion of cherubs and cupids above the heads of the married pair, a marriage worthy of a frieze panel; but it had been sweet and mirthful.

On the previous evening, Jean Valjean had handed to Marius, in presence of M. Gillenormand, the five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs.

The marriage being performed under the law of community, the deeds were simple.

Toussaint was henceforth useless to Jean Valjean; Cosette had inherited her and promoted her to the rank of waiting maid.

As for Jean Valjean, there was a beautiful room in the Gillenormand house furnished expressly for him, and Cosette had said to him so irresistibly: "Father, I pray you," that she had made him almost promise that he would come and occupy it.

A few days before the day fixed for the marriage, an accident happened to Jean Valjean; he slightly bruised the thumb of his right hand. It was not serious; and he had allowed nobody to take any trouble about it, nor dress it, nor even to see his hurt, not even Cosette. It compelled him, however, to muffle his hand in a bandage, and to carry his arm in a sling, and prevented his signing anything. M. Gillenormand, as Cosette's overseeing guardian, took his place.

We shall take the reader neither to the mairie nor to the church. We hardly follow two lovers as far as that, and we generally turn our backs upon the drama as soon as it puts its bridegroom's bouquet into its buttonhole.

JEAN VALJEAN STILL HAS HIS ARM IN A SLING

To realise his dream. To whom is that given? There must be elections for that heaven; we are all unconscious candidates; the angels vote. Cosette and Marius had been elected.

Cosette, at the mairie and in the church, was brilliant and touching. Toussaint, aided by Nicolette, had dressed her.

Cosette wore her dress of Binche guipure over a skirt of white taffetas, a veil of English point, a necklace of fine pearls, a crown of orange flowers; all this was white, and, in this whiteness, she was radiant. It was an exquisite candour, dilating and transfiguring itself into luminousness. One would have said she was a virgin in process of becoming a goddess.

Marius' beautiful hair was perfumed and lustrous; here and there might be discerned, under the thickness of the locks, pallid lines, which were the scars of the barricade.

The grandfather, superb, his head held high, uniting more than ever in his toilet and manners all the elegances of the time of Barras, conducted Cosette. He took the place of Jean Valjean, who as his arm was in a sling, could not give his hand to the bride.

Jean Valjean, in black, followed and smiled.

"Monsieur Fauchelevent," said the grandfather to him, "this is a happy day. I vote for the end of afflictions and sorrows. There must no longer be any sadness anywhere henceforth. By Jove! I decree joy! Evil has no right to be. That there should be unfortunate men—in truth, it is a shame to the blue sky. Evil does not come from man, who, in reality, is good. All human miseries have for their chief seat and central government Hell, otherwise called the Tuileries of the devil. Good, here am I saying demagogical words now! As for me, I no longer have any political opinions; that all men may be rich, that is to say, happy, that is all I ask for."

When, at the completion of all the ceremonies, after having pronounced before the mayor and the priest every possible yes, after having signed the registers at the municipality and at the sacristy, after having exchanged their rings, after having been on their knees elbow to elbow under the canopy of white moire in the smoke of the censer, hand in hand, admired and envied by all, Marius in black, she in white preceded by the usher in colonel's epaulettes, striking the pavement with his halberd, between two hedges of marvelling spectators, they arrived under the portal of the church where the folding-doors were both open, ready to get into the carriage again, and all was over, Cosette could not yet believe it. She looked at Marius, she looked at the throng, she looked at the sky; it seemed as if she were afraid of awaking. Her astonished and bewildered air rendered her unspeakably bewitching. To return, they got into the same carriage, Marius by Cosette's side; M. Gillenormand and Jean Valjean sat opposite. Aunt Gillenormand had drawn back one degree, and was in the second carriage. "My children," said the grandfather, "here you are Monsieur the Baron and Madame the Baroness, with thirty thousand francs a year." And Cosette, leaning close up to Marius, caressed his ear with this angelic whisper: "It is true, then. My name is Marius. I am Madame You."

Then they returned to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire, to their home. Marius, side by side with Cosette, ascended, triumphant and radiant, that staircase up which he had been carried dying. The poor gathered before the door, and, sharing their purses, they blessed them. There were flowers everywhere. The house was not less perfumed than the church; after incense, roses. They thought they heard voices singing in the infinite; they had God in their hearts; destiny appeared to them like a ceiling of stars; they saw above their heads a gleam of sunrise.

THE INSEPARABLE

JEAN VALJEAN returned home. He lighted his candle and went upstairs. The apartment was empty. Toussaint herself was no longer there. Jean Valjean's step made more noise than usual in the rooms. All the closets were open. He went into Cosette's room. There were no sheets on the bed. The pillow, without a pillow-case and without laces, was laid upon the coverlets folded at the foot of the mattress of which the ticking was to be seen and on which nobody should sleep henceforth. All the little feminine objects to which Cosette clung had been carried away; there remained only the heavy furniture and the four walls. Toussaint's bed was also stripped. A single bed was made and seemed waiting for somebody, that was Jean Valjean's.

Jean Valjean looked at the walls, shut some closet doors, went and came from one room to the other.

Then he found himself again in his own room, and he put his candle on a table.

He had released his arm from the sling, and he helped himself with his right hand as if he did not suffer from it.

He approached his bed, and his eye fell, was it by chance? was it with intention? upon the *inseparable,* of which Cosette had been jealous; upon the little trunk which never left him. On the 4th of June, on arriving in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, he had placed it upon a candle-stand at the head of his bed. He went to this stand with a sort of vivacity, took a key from his pocket, and opened the valise.

He took out slowly the garments in which, ten years before, Cosette had left Montfermeil; first the little dress, then the black scarf, then the great heavy child's shoes which Cosette could have almost put on still, so small a foot she had, then the bodice of very thick fustian, then the knit-skirt, then the apron with pockets, then the woollen stockings. Those stockings, on which the shape of a little leg was still gracefully marked, were hardly longer than Jean Valjean's hand. These were all black. He had carried these garments for her to Montfermeil. As he took them out of the valise, he laid them on the bed. He was thinking. He remembered. It was in winter, a very cold December, she shivered half-naked in rags, her poor little feet all red in her wooden shoes. He, Jean Valjean, he had taken her away from those rags to clothe her in this mourning garb. The mother must have been pleased in her tomb to see her daughter wear mourning for her, and especially to see that she was clad, and that she was warm. He thought of that forest of Montfermeil; they had crossed it together, Cosette and he; he thought of the weather, of the trees without leaves, of the forest without birds, of the sky without sun; it is all the same, it was charming. He arranged the little things upon the bed, the scarf next the skirt, the stockings beside the shoes, the bodice beside the dress, and he looked at them one after another. She was no higher than that, she had her great doll in her arms, she had put her louis d'or in the pocket of this apron, she laughed, they walked holding each other by the hand, she had nobody but him in the world.

Then his venerable white head fell upon the bed, this old stoical heart broke, his face was swallowed up, so to speak, in Cosette's garments, and anybody who had passed along the staircase at that moment, would have heard fearful sobs.

BOOK VI—THE LAST DROP IN THE CHALICE

THE SEVENTH CIRCLE AND THE EIGHTH HEAVEN

The day after a wedding is solitary. The privacy of the happy is respected. And thus their slumber is a little belated. The tumult of visits and felicitations does not commence until later. On the morning of the 17th of February, it was a little after noon, when Basque, his napkin and duster under his arm, busy "doing his antechamber," heard a light rap at the door. There was no ring, which is considerate on such a day. Basque opened and saw M. Fauchelevent. He introduced him into the parlour, still cumbered and topsy-turvy, and which had the appearance of the battle-field of the evening's festivities.

"Faith, monsieur," observed Basque, "we are waking up late."

"Has your master risen?" inquired Jean Valjean.

"How is monsieur's arm?" answered Basque.

"Better. Has your master risen?"

"Which? the old or the new one?"

"Monsieur Pontmercy."

"Monsieur the Baron?" said Basque, drawing himself up.

One is baron to his domestics above all. Something of it is reflected upon them; they have what a philosopher would call the spattering of the title, and it flatters them. Marius, to speak of it in passing, a republican militant, and he had proved it, was now a baron in spite of himself. A slight revolution had taken place in the family in regard to this title. At present it was M. Gillenormand who clung to it and Marius who made light of it. But Colonel Pontmercy had written: *My son will bear my title.* Marius obeyed. And then Cosette, in whom the woman was beginning to dawn, was in raptures at being a baroness.

"Monsieur the Baron?" repeated Basque. "I will go and see. I will tell him that Monsieur Fauchelevent is here."

"No. Do not tell him that it is I. Tell him that somebody asks to speak with him in private, and do not give him any name."

"Ah!" said Basque.

"I wish to give him a surprise."

"Ah!" resumed Basque, giving himself his second ah! as an exclamation of the first.

And he went out.

A few minutes elapsed. Jean Valjean was motionless in the spot where Basque had left him. He was very pale. His eyes were hollow, and so sunken in their sockets from want of sleep that they could hardly be seen. His black coat had the weary folds of a garment which has passed the night. The elbows were whitened with that down which is left on cloth by the chafing of linen. Jean Valjean was looking at the window marked out by the sun upon the floor at his feet.

There was a noise at the door, he raised his eyes.

Marius entered, his head erect, his mouth smiling, an indescribable light upon his face, his forehead radiant, his eye triumphant. He also had not slept.

"It is you, father!" exclaimed he on perceiving Jean Valjean; "That idiot of a Basque with his mysterious air! But you come too early. It is only half an hour after noon yet. Cosette is asleep."

That word *Father,* said to M. Fauchelevent by Marius, signified: Supreme felicity. There had always been, as we know, barrier, coldness, and constraint between them; ice to break or to melt. Marius had reached that degree of intoxication where the barrier was falling, the ice was dissolving, and M. Fauchelevent was to him, as to Cosette, a father.

He continued; words overflowing from him, which is characteristic of these divine paroxysms of joy:

"How glad I am to see you! If you knew how we missed you yesterday! Good morning, father. How is your hand? Better, is it not?"

And satisfied with the good answer which he made to himself, he went on:

"We have both of us talked much about you. Cosette loves you so much! You will not forget that your room is here. We will have no more of the Rue de l'Homme Armé. We will have no more of it at all. How could you go live in a street like that, which is sickly, which is scowling, which is ugly, which has a barrier at one end, where you are cold, and where you cannot get in? you will come and instal yourself here. And that to-day. Or you will have a bone to pick with Cosette. She intends to lead us all by the nose I warn you. You have seen your room, it is close by ours, it looks upon the gardens; the lock has been fixed, the bed is made, it is all ready, you have nothing to do but to come. Cosette has put a great old easy chair of Utrecht velvet beside your bed, to which she said: stretch out your arms for him. Every spring, in the clump of acacias which is in front of your windows, there comes a nightingale, you will have her in two months. You will have her nest at your left and ours at your right. By night she will sing, and by day Cosette will talk. Your room is full in the south. Cosette will arrange your books there for you, your voyage of Captain Cook, and the other, Vancouver's, all your things. There is, I believe, a little valise which you treasure, I have selected a place of honour for it. You have conquered my grandfather, you suit him. We will live together. Do you know whist? you will overjoy my grandfather, if you know whist. You will take Cosette to walk on my court-days, you will give her your arm, you know, as at the Luxembourg, formerly. We have absolutely decided to be very happy. And you are part of our happiness, do you understand, father? Come now, you breakfast with us to-day?"

"Monsieur," said Jean Valjean, "I have one thing to tell you. I am an old convict."

The limit of perceptible acute sounds may be passed quite as easily for the mind as for the ear. Those words: *I am an old convict,* coming from M. Fauchelevent's mouth and entering Marius' ear, went beyond the possible. Marius did not hear. It seemed to him that something had just been said to him; but he knew not what. He stood aghast.

He then perceived that the man who was talking to him was terrible. Excited as he was, he had not until this moment noticed that frightful pallor.

Jean Valjean united the black cravat which sustained his right arm, took off the cloth wound about his hand, laid his thumb bare, and showed it to Marius.

"There is nothing the matter with my hand," said he.

Marius looked at the thumb.

"There has never been anything the matter with it," continued Jean Valjean.

There was, in fact, no trace of a wound.

Jean Valjean pursued:

"It was best that I should be absent from your marriage. I absented myself as much as I could. I feigned this wound so as not to commit a forgery, not to introduce a nullity into the marriage acts, to be excused from signing."

Marius stammered out:

"What does this mean?"

"It means," answered Jean Valjean, "that I have been in the galleys."

"You drive me mad!" exclaimed Marius in dismay.

"Monsieur Pontmercy," said Jean Valjean, "I was nineteen years in the galleys. For robbery. Then I was sentenced for life. For robbery. For a second offence. At this hour I am in breach of ban."

It was useless for Marius to recoil before the reality, to refuse the fact, to resist the evidence; he was compelled to yield. He began to comprehend, and as always happens in such a case, he comprehended beyond the truth. He felt the shiver of a horrible interior flash; an idea which made him shudder, crossed his mind. He caught a glimpse in the future of a hideous destiny for himself.

"Tell all, tell all!" cried he. "You are Cosette's father!"

And he took two steps backward with an expression of unspeakable horror.

Jean Valjean raised his head with such a majesty of attitude that he seemed to rise to the ceiling.

"It is necessary that you believe me in this, monsieur; although the oath of such as I be not received."

Here he made a pause; then, with a sort of sovereign and sepulchral authority, he added, articulating slowly and emphasising his syllables:

"——You will believe me. I, the father of Cosette! before God, no. Monsieur Baron Pontmercy, I am a peasant of Faverolles. I earned my living by pruning trees. My name is not Fauchelevent, my name is Jean Valjean. I am nothing to Cosette. Compose yourself."

Marius faltered:

"Who proves it to me?——"

"I. Since I say so."

Marius looked at this man. He was mournful, yet self-possessed. No lie could come out of such a calmness. That which is frozen is sincere. We feel the truth in that sepulchral coldness.

"I believe you," said Marius.

"To live, once I stole a loaf of bread; to-day, to live I will not steal a name."

"To live!" interrupted Marius. "You have no need of that name to live!"

"Ah! I understand," answered Jean Valjean, rising and lowering his head several times in succession.

There was a pause. Both were silent, each sunk in an abyss of thought. Marius had seated himself beside a table, and was resting the corner of his mouth on one of his bent fingers. Jean Valjean was walking back and forth. He stopped before a glass and stood motionless. Then, as if answering some inward reasoning, he said, looking at that glass in which he did not see himself:

"While at present, I am relieved!"

He resumed his walk and went to the other end of the parlour. Just as he began to turn, he perceived that Marius was noticing his walk. He said to him with an inexpressible accent:

"I drag one leg a little. You understand why now."

Then he turned quite round towards Marius:

"And now, monsieur, picture this to yourself: I have said nothing, I have remained Monsieur Fauchelevent, I have taken my place in your house, I am one of you, I am in my room, I come to breakfast in the morning in slippers, at night we all three go to the theatre, I accompany Madame Pontmercy to the Tuileries and the Place Royale, we are together, you suppose me your equal; some fine day I am there, you are there, we are chatting, we are laughing, suddenly you hear a voice shout this name: Jean Valjean! and you see that appalling hand, the police, spring out of the shadow and abruptly tear off my mask!"

He ceased again; Marius had risen with a shudder. Jean Valjean resumed:

"What say you?"

Marius' silence answered.

Jean Valjean continued:

"You see very well that I am right in not keeping quiet. Go on, be happy, be in heaven, be an angel of an angel, be in the sunshine, and be contented with it, and do not trouble yourself about the way which a poor condemned man takes to open his heart and do his duty; you have a wretched man before you, monsieur."

Marius crossed the parlour slowly, and, when he was near Jean Valjean, extended him his hand.

But Marius had to take that hand which did not offer itself, Jean Valjean was passive, and it seemed to Marius that he was grasping a hand of marble.

"My grandfather has friends," said Marius. "I will procure your pardon."

"It is useless," answered Jean Valjean. "They think me dead, that is enough. The dead are not subjected to surveillance. They are supposed to moulder tranquilly. Death is the same thing as pardon."

And, disengaging his hand, which Marius held, he added with a sort of inexorable dignity:

"Besides, to do my duty, that is the friend to which I have recourse; and I need pardon of but one, that is my conscience."

He remained thoughtful a moment, passing the end of his forefinger over his thumb-nail mechanically, then he raised his voice:

"It is all nearly finished. There is one thing left——"

"What?"

Jean Valjean had as it were a supreme hesitation, and voiceless, almost breathless, he faltered out rather than said:

"Now that you know, do you think, monsieur, you who are the master, that I ought not to see Cosette again?"

"I think that would be best," answered Marius coldly.

"I shall not see her again," murmured Jean Valjean.

And he walked towards the door.

He placed his hand upon the knob, the latch yielded, the door started, Jean Valjean opened it wide enough to enable him to pass out, stopped a second motionless, then shut the door, and turned towards Marius.

He was no longer pale, he was livid. There was no longer tears in his eyes, but a sort of tragical flame. His voice had again become strangely calm.

"But, monsieur," said he, "if you are willing, I will come and see her. I assure you that I desire it very much. If I had not clung to seeing Cosette, I should not have made the avowal which I have made, I should have gone away; but wishing to stay in the place where Cosette is and to continue to see her, I was compelled in honour to tell you all. You follow my reasoning, do you not? that is a thing which explains itself. You see, for nine years past, I have had her near me. We lived first in that ruin on the boulevard, then in the convent, then near the Luxembourg. It was there that you saw her for the first time. You remember her blue plush hat. We were afterwards in the quartier of the Invalides where there was a grating and a garden. Rue Plumet. I lived in a little back-yard where I heard her piano. That was my life. We never left each other. That lasted nine years and some months. I was like her father, and she was my child. I don't know whether you understand me, Monsieur Pontmercy, but from the present time, to see her no more, to speak to her no more, to have nothing more, that would be hard. If you do not think it wrong, I will come from time to time to see Cosette. I should not come often. I would not stay long. You might say I should be received in the little low room. On the ground floor. I would willingly come in by the back-door, which is for servants, but that would excite wonder, perhaps. It is better, I suppose, that I should enter by the usual door. Monsieur, indeed, I would really like to see Cosette a little still. As rarely as you please. Put your self in my place, it is all that I have. And then, we must take care. If I should not come at all, it would have a bad effect, it would be thought singular. For instance, what I can do, is to come in the evening, at nightfall."

"You will come every evening," said Marius, "and Cosette will expect you."

"You are kind, monsieur," said Jean Valjean.

Marius bowed to Jean Valjean, happiness conducted despair to the door, and these two men separated.

BOOK VII—THE TWILIGHT WANE

THE BASEMENT ROOM

The next day, at nightfall, Jean Valjean knocked at the M. Gillenormand porte-cochère. Basque received him. Basque happened to be in the court-yard very conveniently, and as if he had had orders. It sometimes happens that one says to a servant: "You will be on the watch for Monsieur So-and-so, when he comes."

Basque, without waiting for Jean Valjean to come up to him, addressed him as follows:

"Monsieur the Baron told me to ask monsieur whether he desires to go upstairs or to remain below?"

"To remain below," answered Jean Valjean.

Basque, who was moreover absolutely respectful, opened the door of the basement room and said: "I will inform madame."

The room which Jean Valjean entered was an arched and damp basement, used as a cellar when necessary, looking upon the street, paved with red tiles, and dimly lighted by a window with an iron grating.

The room was not of those which are harassed by the brush, the duster, and the broom. In it the dust was tranquil. There the persecution of the spiders had not been organised. A fine web, broadly spread out, very black, adorned with dead flies, ornamented one of the window-panes. The room, small and low, was furnished with a pile of empty bottles heaped up in one corner. The wall had been washed with a wash of yellow ochre, which was scaling off in large flakes. At the end was a wooden mantel, painted black, with a narrow shelf. A fire was kindled, which indicated that somebody had anticipated Jean Valjean's answer: *To remain below.*

Two armchairs were placed at the corners of the fireplace. Between the chairs was spread, in guise of a carpet, an old bed-side rug, showing more warp than wool.

The room was lighted by the fire in the fireplace and the twilight from the window.

Jean Valjean was fatigued. For some days he had neither eaten nor slept. He let himself fall into one of the arm-chairs.

Basque returned, set a lighted candle upon the mantel, and retired. Jean Valjean, his head bent down and his chin upon his breast, noticed neither Basque nor the candle.

Suddenly he started up. Cosette was behind him.

He had not seen her come in, but he had felt that she was coming.

He turned. He gazed at her. She was adorably beautiful. But what he looked upon with that deep look, was not her beauty but her soul.

"Ah well!" exclaimed Cosette, "father, I knew that you were singular, but I should never have thought this. What an idea! Marius tells me that it is you who wish me to receive you here."

"Yes, it is I."

"I expected the answer. Well, I warn you that I am going to make a scene. Let us begin at the beginning. Father, kiss me."

And she offered her cheek.

Jean Valjean remained motionless.

"You do not stir. I see it. You act guilty. But it is all the same, I forgive you. Jesus Christ said: 'Offer the other cheek.' Here it is."

And she offered the other cheek.

Jean Valjean did not move. It seemed as if his feet were nailed to the floor.

"This is getting serious," said Cosette. "What have I done to you? I declare I am confounded. You owe me amends. You will dine with us."

"I have dined."

"That is not true. I will have Monsieur Gillenormand scold you. Grandfathers are made to scold fathers. Come. Go up to the parlour with me. Immediately."

"Impossible."

Cosette here lost ground a little. She ceased to order and passed to questions.

"But why not? and you choose the ugliest room in the house to see me in. It is horrible here."

"You know, madame, I am peculiar, I have my whims."

Cosette clapped her little hands together.

"Madame! Still again! What does this mean?"

Jean Valjean fixed upon her that distressing smile to which he sometimes had recourse:

"You have wished to be madame. You are so."

"Not to you, father."

"Don't call me father any more."

"What?"

"Call me Monsieur Jean. Jean, if you will."

"You are no longer father? I am no longer Cosette? Monsieur Jean? What does this mean? but these are revolutions, these are! what then has happened? look me in the face now. And you will not live with us! And you will not have my room! What have I done to you? Is there anything the matter?"

"Nothing."

"Well then?"

"All is as usual."

"Why do you change your name?"

"You have certainly changed yours."

He smiled again with that same smile and added:

"Since you are Madame Pontmercy I can surely be Monsieur Jean."

"I don't understand anything about it. It is all nonsense; I shall ask my husband's permission for you to be Monsieur Jean. I hope that he will not consent to it. You make me a great deal of trouble. You may have whims, but you must not grieve your darling Cosette. It is wrong. You have no right to be naughty, you are too good."

He made no answer.

She seized both his hands hastily and, with an irresistible impulse, raising them towards her face, she pressed them against her neck under her chin, which is a deep token of affection.

"Oh!" said she to him, "be good!"

And she continued:

"This is what I call being good: being nice, coming to stay here, there are birds here as well as in the Rue Plumet, living with us, leaving that hole in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, not giving us riddles to guess, being like other people, dining with us, breakfasting with us, being my father."

He disengaged his hands.

"You have no more need of a father, you have a husband."

Cosette could not contain herself.

"I no more need of a father! To things like that which have no common sense, one really doesn't know what to say!"

"If Toussaint was here," replied Jean Valjean, like one who is in search of authorities and who catches at every straw, "she would be the first to acknowledge that it is true that I always had my peculiar ways. There is nothing new in this. I have always liked my dark corner."

"But it is cold here. We can't see clearly. It is horrid, too, to want to be Monsieur Jean. I don't want you to talk so to me."

"Just now, on my way here," answered Jean Valjean, "I saw a piece of furniture in the Rue Saint Louis. At a cabinet maker's. If I were a pretty woman, I should make myself a present of that piece of furniture. A very fine toilet table; in the present style. What you call rosewood, I think. It is inlaid. A pretty large glass. There are drawers in it. It is handsome."

"Oh! the ugly bear!" replied Cosette.

And with a bewitching sauciness, pressing her teeth together and separating her lips, she blew upon Jean Valjean. It was a Grace copying a kitten.

"I am furious," she said. "Since yesterday, you all make me rage. Everybody spites me. I don't understand. You don't defend me against Marius. Marius doesn't uphold me against you, I am all alone. I arrange a room handsomely. If I could have put the good God into it, I would have done it. You leave me my room upon my hands. My tenant bankrupts me. I order Nicolette to have a nice little dinner. Nobody wants your dinner, madame. And my father Fauchelevent, wishes me to call him Monsieur Jean, and to receive him in a hideous, old, ugly, mouldy cellar, where the walls have a beard, and where there are empty bottles for vases, and spiders' webs for curtains. You are singular, I admit, that is your way, but a truce is granted to people who get married. You should not have gone back to being singular immediately. So you are going to be well satisfied with your horrid Rue de l'Homme Armé. I was very forlorn there, myself! What have you against me? You give me a great deal of trouble. Fie!"

And, growing suddenly serious, she looked fixedly at Jean Valjean, and added:

"So you don't like it that I am happy?"

Artlessness, unconsciously, sometimes penetrates very deep. This question, simple to Cosette, was severe to Jean Valjean. Cosette wished to scratch; she tore.

Jean Valjean grew pale. For a moment he did not answer, then, with an indescribable accent and talking to himself, he murmured:

"Her happiness was the aim of my life. Now, God may beckon me away. Cosette, you are happy; my time is full."

"Ah, you have called me Cosette!" exclaimed she.

And she sprang upon his neck.

Jean Valjean, in desperation, clasped her to his breast wildly. It seemed to him almost as if he were taking her back.

"Thank you, father!" said Cosette to him.

The transport was becoming poignant to Jean Valjean. He gently put away Cosette's arms, and took his hat.

"Well?" said Cosette.

Jean Valjean answered:

"I will leave you madame; they are waiting for you."

And, from the door, he added:

"I called you Cosette. Tell your husband that that shall not happen again. Pardon me."

Jean Valjean went out, leaving Cosette astounded at that enigmatic farewell.

BOOK VIII—SUPREME SHADOW, SUPREME DAWN

PITY FOR THE UNHAPPY, BUT INDULGENCE FOR THE HAPPY

It is a terrible thing to be happy! How pleased we are with it! How all-sufficient we think it! How, being in possession of the false aim of life, happiness, we forget the true aim, duty!

We must say, however, that it would be unjust to blame Marius.

Marius as we have explained, before his marriage, had put no questions to M. Fauchelevent, and, since, he had feared to put any to Jean Valjean. He had regretted the promise into which he had allowed himself to be led. He had reiterated to himself many times that he had done wrong in making that concession to despair. He did nothing more than gradually to banish Jean Valjean from his house, and to obliterate him as much as possible from Cosette's mind. He had in some sort constantly placed himself between Cosette and Jean Valjean, sure that in that way she would not notice him, and would never think of him. It was more than obliteration, it was eclipse.

Marius did what he deemed necessary and just. He supposed he had, for discarding Jean Valjean, without harshness, but without weakness, serious reasons, which we have already seen, and still others which we shall see further on. Having chanced to meet, in a cause in which he was engaged, an old clerk of the house of Laffitte, he had obtained, without seeking it, some mysterious information which he could not, in truth, probe to the bottom, from respect for the secret which he had promised to keep, and from care for Jean Valjean's perilous situation. He believed, at that very time, that he had a solemn duty to perform, the restitution of the six hundred thousand francs to somebody whom he was seeking as cautiously as possible. In the meantime, he abstained from using that money.

As for Cosette, she was in none of these secrets; but it would be hard to condemn her also.

There was an all-powerful magnetism flowing from Marius to her, which compelled her to do, instinctively and almost mechanically, what Marius wished. She felt, in regard to "Monsieur Jean," a will from Marius; she conformed to it. Her husband had had nothing to say to her; she experienced the vague, but clear pressure of his unspoken wishes, and obeyed blindly. Her obedience in this consisted in not remembering what Marius forgot. She had to make no effort for that. Without knowing why herself, and without affording any grounds for censure, her soul had so thoroughly become her husband's soul, that whatever was covered with shadow in Marius' thought, was obscured in hers.

We must not go too far, however; in what concerns Jean Valjean, this forgetfulness and this obliteration were only superficial. She was rather thoughtless than forgetful. At heart, she really loved him whom she had so long called father. But she loved her husband still more. It was that which had somewhat swayed the balance of this heart, inclined in a single direction.

It sometimes happened that Cosette spoke of Jean Valjean, and wondered. Then Marius calmed her: "He is absent, I think. Didn't he say that he was going away on a journey?" "That is true," thought Cosette. "He was in the habit of disappearing in this way. But not for so long." Two or three times she sent Nicolette to inquire in the Rue de l'Homme Armé if Monsieur Jean had returned from his journey. Jean Valjean had the answer returned that he had not.

Cosette did not inquire further, having but one need on earth, Marius.

We must also say that, on their part, Marius and Cosette had been absent. They had been to Vernon. Marius had taken Cosette to his father's grave.

Marius had little by little withdrawn Cosette from Jean Valjean. Cosette was passive.

Moreover, what is called much too harshly, in certain cases, the ingratitude of children, is not always as blameworthy a thing as is supposed. It is the ingratitude of nature. Nature, as we have said elsewhere, "looks forward." Nature divides living beings into the coming and the going. The going are turned towards the shadow, the coming towards the light. Hence a separation, which, on the part of the old, is a fatality, and, on the part of the young, involuntary. This separation, at first insensible, gradually increases, like every separation of branches. The limbs, without parting from the trunk, recede from it. It is not their fault. Youth goes where joy is, to festivals, to brilliant lights, to loves. Old age goes to its end. They do not lose sight of each other, but the ties are loosened. The affection of the young is chilled by life; that of the old by the grave. We must not blame these poor children.

THE LAST FLICKERINGS OF THE EXHAUSTED LAMP

One day Jean Valjean went down stairs, took three steps into the street, sat down upon a stone block, upon that same block where Gavroche, on the night of the 5th of June, had found him musing; he remained there a few minutes, then went upstairs again. This was the last oscillation of the pendulum. The next day, he did not leave his room. The day after he did not leave his bed.

His portress, who prepared his frugal meal, some cabbage, a few potatoes with a little pork, looked into the brown earthen plate, and exclaimed:

"Why, you didn't eat anything yesterday, poor dear man!"

"Yes, I did," answered Jean Valjean.

"The plate is all full."

"Look at the water-pitcher. That is empty."

'That shows that you have drunk; it don't show that you have eaten."

"Well," said Jean Valjean, "suppose I have only been hungry for water?"

"That is called thirst, and, when people don't eat at the same time, it is called fever."

"I will eat to-morrow."

"Or at Christmas. Why not eat to-day? Do people say: I will eat to-morrow! To leave me my whole plateful without touching it! My cole slaugh, which was so good!"

Jean Valjean took the old woman's hand:

"I promise to eat it," said he to her in his benevolent voice.

"I am not satisfied with you," answered the portress.

Jean Valjean scarcely ever saw any other human being than this good woman. There are streets in Paris in which nobody walks, and houses into which nobody comes. He was in one of those streets, and in one of those houses.

While he still went out, he had bought of a brazier for a few sous a little copper crucifix, which he had hung upon a nail before his bed. The cross is always good to look upon.

A week elapsed, and Jean Valjean had not taken a step in his room. He was still in bed. The portress said to her husband: "The goodman upstairs does not get up any more, he does not eat any more, he won't last long. He has trouble, he has. Nobody can get it out of my head that his daughter has made a bad match."

The porter replied, with the accent of the marital sovereignty:

"If he is rich, let him have a doctor. If he is not rich, let him not have any. If he doesn't have a doctor, he will die."

"And if he does have one?"

"He will die," said the porter.

The portress began to dig up with an old knife some grass which was sprouting in what she called her pavement, and, while she was pulling up the grass, she muttered:

"It is a pity. An old man who is so nice! He is white as a chicken."

She saw a physician of the quartier passing at the end of the street; she took it upon herself to beg him to go up.

"It is on the second floor," said she to him. "You will have nothing to do but go in. As the goodman does not stir from his bed now, the key is in the door all the time."

The physician saw Jean Valjean, and spoke with him.

When he came down, the portress questioned him.

"Well, doctor?"

"Your sick man is very sick."

"What is the matter with him?"

"Everything and nothing. He is a man who, to all appearance, has lost some dear friend. People die of that."

"What did he tell you?"

"He told me that he was well."

"Will you come again, doctor."

"Yes," answered the physician. "But another than I must come again."

A PEN IS HEAVY TO HIM WHO LIFTED FAUCHELEVENT'S CART

One evening Jean Valjean had difficulty in raising himself upon his elbow; he felt his wrist and found no pulse; his breathing was short, and stopped at intervals; he realised that he was weaker than he had been before. Then, undoubtedly under the pressure of some supreme desire, he made an effort, sat up in bed, and dressed himself. He put on his old working-man's garb. As he went out no longer, he had returned to it, and he preferred it. He was obliged to stop several times while dressing; the mere effort of putting on his waistcoat, made the sweat roll down his forehead.

Since he had been alone, he had made his bed in the ante-room, so as to occupy this desolate tenement as little as possible.

He opened the valise and took out Cosette's suit.

He spread it out upon his bed.

The bishop's candlesticks were in their place, on the mantel. He took two wax tapers from a drawer, and put them into the candlesticks. Then, although it was still broad daylight, it was in summer, he lighted them. We sometimes see torches lighted thus in broad day, in rooms where the dead lie.

Each step that he took in going from one piece of furniture to another, exhausted him, and he was obliged to sit down. It was not ordinary fatigue which spends the strength that it may be renewed; it was the remnant of possible motion; it was exhausted life pressed out drop by drop in overwhelming efforts, never to be made again.

One of the chairs upon which he sank, was standing before that mirror, so fatal for him, so providential for Marius, in which he had read Cosette's note, reversed on the blotter. He saw himself in this mirror, and did not recognise himself. He was eighty years old; before Marius' marriage, one would hardly have thought him fifty; this year had counted thirty. What was now upon his forehead was not the wrinkle of age, it was the mysterious mark of death. You perceived on it the impress of the relentless talon. His cheeks were sunken; the skin of his face was of that colour which suggests the idea of earth already above it; the corners of his mouth were depressed as in that mask which the ancients sculptured upon tombs; he looked at the hollowness with a look of reproach; you would have said it was one of those grand tragic beings who rise in judgment.

He was in that condition, the last phase of dejection, in which sorrow no longer flows; it is, so to speak, coagulated; the soul is covered as if with a clot of despair.

Night had come. With much labour he drew a table and an old arm-chair near the fireplace, and put upon the table pen, ink, and paper.

Then, he fainted. When he regained consciousness, he was thirsty. Being unable to lift the water-pitcher, with great effort he tipped it towards his mouth, and drank a swallow.

Then he turned to the bed, and, still sitting, for he could stand but a moment, he looked at the little black dress, and all those dear objects.

Such contemplations last for hours which seem minutes. Suddenly he shivered, he felt that the chill was coming; he leaned upon the table which was lighted by the bishop's candle-sticks, and took the pen.

As neither the pen nor the ink had been used for a long time, the tip of the pen was bent back, the ink was dried, he was obliged to get up and put a few drops of water into the ink, which he could not do without stopping and sitting down two or three times, and he was compelled to write with the back of the pen. He wiped his forehead from time to time.

His hand trembled. He slowly wrote the few lines which follow:

"Cosette, I bless you. I am going to make an explanation to you. Your husband was quite right in giving me to understand that I ought to leave; still there is some mistake in what he believed, but he was right. He is very good. Always love him well when I am dead. Monsieur Pontmercy, always love my darling child. Cosette, this paper will be found, this is what I want to tell you, you shall see the figures, if I have the strength to recall them, listen well, this money is really your own. This is the whole story: The white jet comes from Norway, the black jet comes from England, the black glass imitation comes from Germany. The jet is lighter, more precious, more costly. We can make imitations in France as well as in Germany. It requires a little anvil two inches square, and a spirit-lamp to soften the wax. The wax was formerly made with resin and lamp-black, and cost four francs a pound. I hit upon making it with gum lac and turpentine. This costs only thirty sous, and it is much better. The buckles are made of a violet glass, which is fastened by means of this wax to a narrow rim of black iron. The glass should be violet for iron trinkets, and the black for gold trinkets. Spain purchases many of them. That is the country of jet——"

Here he stopped, the pen fell from his fingers, he gave way to one of those despairing sobs which rose at times from the depths of his being, the poor man clasped his head with both hands, and reflected.

"Oh!" exclaimed he within himself (pitiful cries, heard by God alone), "it is all over. I shall never see her more. She is a smile which has passed over me. I am going to enter into the night without even seeing her again. Oh! a minute, an instant, to hear her voice, to touch her dress, to look at her, the angel! and then to die! It is nothing to die, but it is dreadful to die without seeing her. She would smile upon me, she would say a word to me. Would that harm anybody? No, it is over, forever. Here I am, all alone. My God! my God! I shall never see her again."

At this moment there was a rap at his door.

A BOTTLE OF INK WHICH SERVES ONLY TO WHITEN

That very day, or rather that very evening, just as Marius had left the table and retired into his office, having a bundle of papers to study over, Basque had handed him a letter, saying: "the person who wrote the letter is in the antechamber."

Cosette had taken grandfather's arm, and was walking in the garden.

A letter, as well as a man, may have a forbidding appearance. Coarse paper, clumsy fold, the mere sight of certain missives displeases. The letter which Basque brought was of this kind.

Marius took it. It smelt of tobacco. Nothing awakens a reminiscence like an odour. Marius recognised this tobacco. He looked at the address: *To Monsieur, Monsieur the Baron Pommerci. In his hôtel.* The recognition of the tobacco made him recognise the handwriting. We might say that astonishment has its flashes. Marius was, as it were, illuminated by one of those flashes.

The scent, the mysterious aid-memory, revived a whole world within him. Here was the very paper, the manner of folding, the paleness of the ink; here was, indeed, the well-known handwriting; above all, here was the tobacco. The Jondrette garret appeared before him.

Thus, strange freak of chance! one of the two traces which he had sought so long, the one which he had again recently made so many efforts to gain, and which he believed forever lost, came of itself to him.

He broke the seal eagerly, and read:—

"Monsieur Baron,—If the Supreme Being had given me the talents for it, I could have been Baron Thénard, member of the Institute (Academy of Ciences), but I am not so. I merely bear the same name that he does, happy if this remembrance commends me to the excellence of your bounties. The benefit with which you honour me will be reciprocal. I am in possession of a secret conserning an individual. This individual conserns you. I hold the secret at your disposition, desiring to have the honour of being yuseful to you. I will give you the simple means of drivving from your honourable family this individual who has no right in it, Madame the Baronness being of high birth. The sanctuary of virtue could not coabit longer with crime without abdicating.

"I atend in the entichamber the orders of Monsieur the Baron.—With respect."

The letter was signed "THÉNARD."

This signature was not a false one. It was only a little abridged.

Besides, the rigmarole and the orthography completed the revelation. The certificate of origin was perfect. There was no doubt possible.

The emotion of Marius was deep. After the feeling of surprise, he had a feeling of happiness. Let him now find the other man whom he sought, the man who had saved him, Marius, and he would have nothing more to wish.

He opened one of his secretary drawers, took out some banknotes, put them in his pockets, closed the secretary, and rang. Basque appeared.

"Show him in," said Marius.

Basque announced:

"Monsieur Thénard."

A man entered.

A surprise for Marius. The man who came in was perfectly unknown to him.

"I commence gratis," said the stranger. "You will see that I am interesting."

"Go on."

"Monsieur Baron, you have in your house a robber and an assassin."

Marius shuddered.

"In my house? no," said he.

The stranger imperturbable, brushed his hat with his sleeve, and continued:

"Assassin and robber. Observe, Monsieur Baron, that I do not speak here of acts, old, by-gone, and withered, which may be cancelled by prescription in the eye of the law, and by repentance in the eye of God. I speak of recent acts, present acts, acts yet unknown to justice at this hour. I will proceed. This man has glided into your confidence, and almost into your family, under a false name. I am going to tell you his true name. And to tell it to you for nothing."

"I am listening."

"His name is Jean Valjean."

"I know it."

"I am going to tell you, also for nothing, who he is."

"Say on."

"He is an old convict."

"I know it."

"You know it since I have had the honour of telling you."

"No. I knew it before."

Marius' cool tone, that double reply, *I know it,* his laconic method of speech, embarrassing to conversation, excited some suppressed anger in the stranger. He shot furtively at Marius a furious look, which was immediately extinguished. Quick as it was, this look was one of those which are recognized after they have once been seen; it did not escape Marius. Certain flames can only come from certain souls; the eye, that window of the thought, blazes with it; spectacles hide nothing; you might as well put a glass over hell.

The stranger resumed with a smile:

"I do not permit myself to contradict Monsieur the Baron. At all events, you must see that I am informed. Now, what I have to acquaint you with, is known to myself alone. It concerns the fortune of Madame the Baroness. It is an extraordinary secret. It is for sale. I offer it to you first. Cheap. Twenty thousand francs."

"I know that secret as well as the others," said Marius.

The person felt the necessity of lowering his price a little.

"Monsieur Baron, say ten thousand francs, and I will go on."

"I repeat, that you have nothing to acquaint me with. I know what you wish to tell me."

There was a new flash in the man's eye. He exclaimed:

"Still I must dine to-day. It is an extraordinary secret, I tell you. Monsieur the Baron, I am going to speak. I will speak. Give me twenty francs."

Marius looked at him steadily:

"I know your extraordinary secret; just as I knew Jean Valjean's name: just as I know your name."

"My name?"

"Yes."

"That is not difficult, Monsieur Baron. I have had the honour of writing it to you and telling it to you. Thénard."

"Dier."

"Eh?"

"Thénardier."

"Who is that?"

In danger the porcupine bristles, the beetle feigns death, the Old Guard forms a square; this man began to laugh.

Then, with a fillip, he brushed a speck of dust from his coat-sleeve.

Marius continued:

"You are also the working-man Jondrette, the comedian Fabantou, the poet Genflot, the Spaniard Don Alvarès, and the woman Balizard."

"The woman what?"

"And you have kept a chop-house at Montfermeil."

"A chop-house! never."

"And I tell you that you are Thénardier."

" I deny it."

"And that you are a scoundrel. Here."

And Marius, taking a bank-note from his pocket, threw it in his face.

"Thanks! pardon! five hundred francs! Monsieur Baron!"

And the man, bewildered, bowing, catching the note, examined it.

"Five hundred francs!" he repeated in astonishment. And he stammered out in an undertone: "A serious *fafiot!*"

Then bluntly:

"Well, so be it," exclaimed he. "Let us make ourselves comfortable."

Thénardier, for it was indeed he, was strangely surprised; he would have been disconcerted if he could have been. He had come to bring astonishment, and he himself received it. This humiliation had been compensated by five hundred francs, and, all things considered, he accepted it; but he was none the less astounded.

He saw this Baron Pontmercy for the first time, and, in spite of his disguise, this Baron Pontmercy recognised him, and recognised him thoroughly. And not only was this baron fully informed, in regard to Thénardier, but he seemed fully informed in regard to Jean Valjean. Who was this almost beardless young man, so icy and so generous, who knew people's names, who knew all their names, and who opened his purse to them, who abused rogues like a judge and who paid them like a dupe?

Thénardier had slipped the "serious *fafiot*" into his fob, and was looking at Marius with an almost affectionate humility.

Marius interrupted the silence.

"Thénardier, I have told you your name. Now your secret, what you came to make known to me, do you want me to tell you that? I too have my means of information. You shall see that I know more about it than you do. Jean Valjean, as you have said, is an assassin and a robber. A robber, because he robbed a rich manufacturer, M. Madeleine, whose ruin he caused. An assassin, because he assassinated the police-officer, Javert."

"I don't understand, Monsieur Baron," said Thénardier.

"I will make myself understood. Listen. There was, in an arrondissement of the Pas-de-Calais, about 1822, a man who had had some old difficulty with justice, and who, under the name of M. Madeleine, had reformed and re-established himself. He had become in the full force of the term an upright man. By means of a manufacture, that of black glass trinkets, he had made the fortune of an entire city. As for his own personal fortune, he had made it also, but secondarily, and, in some sort, incidentally. He was the foster-father of the poor. He founded hospitals, opened schools, visited the sick, endowed daughters, supported widows, adopted orphans; he was, as it were, the guardian of the country. He had refused the Cross, he had been appointed mayor. A liberated convict knew the secret of a penalty once incurred by this man; he informed against him and had him arrested, and took advantage of the arrest to come to Paris and draw from the banker, Laffitte—I have the fact from the cashier himself—by means of a false signature, a sum of more than half a million which belonged to M. Madeleine. This convict who robbed M. Madeleine is Jean Valjean. As to the other act, you have just as little to tell me. Jean Valjean killed the officer Javert; he killed him with a pistol. I, who am now speaking to you, I was present."

Thénardier cast upon Marius the sovereign glance of a beaten man, who lays hold on victory again, and who has just recovered in one minute all the ground which he had lost. But the smile returned immediately; the inferior before the superior can only have a skulking triumph, and Thénardier merely said to Marius:

"Monsieur Baron, we are on the wrong track."

And he emphasised this phrase by giving his bunch of trinkets an expressive twirl.

"What!" replied Marius, "do you deny that? These are facts."

"They are chimeras. The confidence with which Monsieur the Baron honours me makes it my duty to tell him so. Before all things, truth and justice. I do not like to see people accused unjustly. Monsieur Baron, Jean Valjean never robbed Monsieur Madeleine, and Jean Valjean never killed Javert."

"You speak strongly! how is that?"

"For two reasons."

"What are they? tell me."

"The first is this: he did not rob Monsieur Madeleine, since it is Jean Valjean himself who was Monsieur Madeleine."

"What is that you are telling me?"

"And the second is this: he did not assassinate Javert, since Javert himself killed Javert."

"What do you mean?"

"That Javert committed suicide."

"Prove it! prove it!" cried Marius, beside himself.

Thénardier resumed, scanning his phrase in the fashion of an ancient Alexandrine:

"The—police—of—ficer—Ja—vert—was—found—drowned—under—a—boat—by—the—Pont—au —Change."

"But prove it now!"

Thénardier took from his pocket a large envelope of grey paper, which seemed to contain folded sheets of different sizes.

"I have my documents," said he, with calmness.

And he added:

"Monsieur Baron, in your interest, I wished to find out Jean Valjean to the bottom. I say that Jean Valjean and Madeleine are the same man; and I say that Javert had no other assassin than Javert; and when I speak I have the proofs. Not manuscript proofs; writing is suspicious; writing is complaisant, but proofs in print."

While speaking, Thénardier took out of the envelope two newspapers, yellow, faded, and strongly saturated with tobacco. One of these two newspapers, broken at all the folds, and falling in square pieces, seemed much older than the other.

"Two facts, two proofs," said Thénardier. And unfolding the two papers, he handed them to Marius.

One, the oldest, a copy of the *Drapeau Blanc,* of the 25th of July, 1823, established the identity of M. Madeleine and Jean Valjean. The other, a *Moniteur* of the 15th of June, 1832, verified the suicide of Javert, adding that it appeared from a verbal report made by Javert to the prefect that, taken prisoner in the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, he had owed his life to the magnanimity of an insurgent who, though he had him at the muzzle of his pistol, instead of blowing out his brains, had fired into the air.

Marius read. There was evidence, certain date, unquestionable proof; these two newspapers had not been printed expressly to support Thénardier's words. The note published in the *Moniteur* was an official communication from the prefecture of police. Marius could not doubt. The information derived from the cashier was false, and he himself was mistaken. Jean Valjean, suddenly growing grand, arose from the cloud. Marius could not restrain a cry of joy:

"Well, then, this unhappy man is a wonderful man! all that fortune was really his own! he is Madeleine, the providence of a whole region! he is Jean Valjean, the saviour of Javert! he is a hero! he is a saint!"

"He is not a saint, and he is not a hero," said Thénardier. "He is an assassin and a robber."

And he added with the tone of a man who begins to feel some authority in himself: "Let us be calm."

Robber, assassin; these words, which Marius supposed were gone, yet which came back, fell upon him like a shower of ice.

"Again," said he.

"Still," said Thénardier. "Jean Valjean did not rob Madeleine, but he is a robber. He did not kill Javert, but he is a murderer."

"Will you speak," resumed Marius, "of that petty theft of forty years ago, expiated, as appears from your newspapers themselves, by a whole life of repentance, abnegation, and virtue?"

"I said assassination and robbery, Monsieur Baron. And I repeat that I speak of recent facts. What I have to reveal to you is absolutely unknown. It belongs to the unpublished. And perhaps you will find in it the source of the fortune adroitly presented by Jean Valjean to Madame the Baroness. I say adroitly, for, by a donation of this kind, to glide into an honourable house, the comforts of which he will share, and, by the same stroke, to conceal his crime, to enjoy his robbery, to bury his name, and to create himself a family, that would not be very unskilful."

"I might interrupt you here," observed Marius; "but continue."

"Monsieur Baron, I will tell you all, leaving the recompense to your generosity. This secret is worth a pile of gold. You will say to me: why have you not gone to Jean Valjean? For a very simple reason: I know that he has dispossessed himself, and dispossessed in your favour, and I think the contrivance ingenious; but he has not a sou left, he would show me his empty hands, and, since I need some money for my voyage to La Joya, I prefer you, who have all, to him who has nothing. I am somewhat fatigued; allow me to take a chair."

Marius sat down, and made sign to him to sit down.

Thénardier installed himself in a cappadine chair, took up the two newspapers, thrust them back into the envelope, and muttered, striking the *Drapeau Blanc* with his nail: "It cost me some hard work to get this one." This done, he crossed his legs and lay back in his chair, an attitude characteristic of people who are sure of what they are saying, then entered into the subject seriously, and emphasising his words:

"Monsieur Baron, on the 6th of June, 1832, about a year ago, the day of the émeute, a man was in the Grand Sewer of Paris, near where the sewer empties into the Seine, between the Pont des Invalides and the Pont d'Iéna."

"Monsieur Baron, a sewer is not the Champ de Mars. One lacks everything there, even room. When two men are in a sewer, they must meet each other. That is what happened. The resident and the traveller were compelled to say good-day to each other, to their mutual regret. The traveller said to the resident: *'You see what I have on my back, I must get out, you have the key, give it to me.'* This convict was a man of terrible strength. There was no refusing him. Still he who had the key parleyed, merely to gain time. He examined the dead man, but he could see nothing, except that he was young, well dressed, apparently a rich man, and all disfigured with blood. While he was talking, he found means to cut and tear off from behind, without the assassin perceiving it, a piece of the assassinated man's coat. A piece of evidence, you understand; means of getting trace of the affair, and proving the crime upon the criminal. He put this piece of evidence in his pocket. After which he opened the grating, let the man out with his incumbrance on his back, shut the grating again and escaped, little caring to be mixed up with the remainder of the adventure, and especially desiring not to be present when the assassin should throw the assassinated man into the river. You understand now. He who was carrying the corpse was Jean Valjean; he who had the key is now speaking to you, and the piece of the coat——"

Thénardier finished the phrase by drawing from his pocket and holding up, on a level with his eyes, between his thumbs and his forefingers, a strip of ragged black cloth, covered with dark stains.

Marius had risen, pale, hardly breathing, his eye fixed upon the scrap of black cloth, and, without uttering a word, without losing sight of this rag, he retreated to the wall, and, with his right hand stretched behind him, groped about for a key which was in the lock of a closet near the chimney. He found this key, opened the closet, and thrust his arm into it without looking, and without removing his startled eyes from the fragment that Thénardier held up.

Meanwhile Thénardier continued:

"Monsieur Baron, I have the strongest reasons to believe that the assassinated young man was an opulent stranger drawn into a snare by Jean Valjean, and the bearer of an enormous sum."

"The young man was myself, and there is the coat!" cried Marius, and he threw an old black coat covered with blood upon the carpet.

Then, snatching the fragment from Thénardier's hands, he bent down over the coat, and applied the piece to the cut skirt. The edges fitted exactly, and the strip completed the coat.

Thénardier was petrified. He thought this: "I am floored."

Marius rose up, quivering, desperate, flashing.

He felt in his pocket, and walked, furious, towards Thénardier, offering him and almost pushing into his face his fist full of five hundred and a thousand franc notes.

"You are a wretch! you are a liar, a slanderer, a scoundrel. You came to accuse this man, you have justified him; you wanted to destroy him, you have succeeded only in glorifying him. And it is you who are a robber! and it is you who are an assassin! I saw you, Thénardier, Jondrette, in that den on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. I know enough about you to send you to the galleys, and further even, if I wished. Here, there are a thousand francs, braggart that you are!"

And he threw a bill for a thousand francs to Thénardier.

"Ah! Jondrette Thénardier, vile knave! let this be a lesson to you, pedlar of secrets, trader in mysteries, fumbler in the dark, wretch! Take these five hundred francs, and leave this place! Waterloo protects you."

"Waterloo!" muttered Thénardier, pocketing the five hundred francs with the thousand francs.

"Yes, assassin! you saved the life of a colonel there——"

"Of a general," said Thénardier, raising his head.

"Of a colonel!" replied Marius with a burst of passion. "I would not give a farthing for a general. And you came here to act out your infamy! I tell you that you have committed every crime. Go! out of my sight! Be happy only, that is all that I desire. Ah! monster! there are three thousand francs more. Take them. You will start to-morrow for America, with your daughter, for your wife is dead, abominable liar. I will see to your departure, bandit, and I will count out to you then twenty thousand francs. Go and get hung elsewhere!"

"Monsieur Baron," answered Thénardier, bowing to the ground, "eternal gratitude."

And Thénardier went out, comprehending nothing, astounded and transported with this sweet crushing under sacks of gold and with this thunderbolt bursting upon his head in bank-notes.

As soon as Thénardier was out of doors, Marius ran to the garden where Cosette was still walking:

"Cosette! Cosette!" cried he. "Come! come quick! Let us go. Basque, a fiacre! Cosette, come. Oh! my God! It was he who saved my life! Let us not lose a minute! Put on your shawl."

Cosette thought him mad, and obeyed.

He did not breathe, he put his hand upon his heart to repress its beating. He walked to and fro with rapid strides, he embraced Cosette: "Oh! Cosette! I am an unhappy man!" said he.

Marius was in a maze. He began to see in this Jean Valjean a strangely lofty and saddened form. An unparalleled virtue appeared before him, supreme and mild, humble in its immensity. The convict was transfigured into Christ. Marius was bewildered by this marvel. He did not know exactly what he saw, but it was grand.

In a moment, a fiacre was at the door.

Marius helped Cosette in and sprang in himself.

"Driver," said he, "Rue de l'Homme Armé, Number 7."

The fiacre started.

"Oh! what happiness!" said Cosette. "Rue de l'Homme Armé! I dared not speak to you of it again. We are going to see Monsieur Jean."

"Your father! Cosette, your father more than ever. Cosette, I see it. You told me that you never received the letter which I sent you by Gavroche. It must have fallen into his hands. Cosette, he went to the barricade to save me. As it is a necessity for him to be an angel, on the way, he saved others; he saved Javert. He snatched me out of that gulf to give me to you. He carried me on his back in that frightful sewer. Oh: I am an unnatural ingrate. Cosette, after having been your providence, he was mine. Only think that there was a horrible quagmire, enough to drown him a hundred times, to drown him in the mire, Cosette! he carried me through that. I had fainted; I saw nothing, I heard nothing, I could know nothing of my own fate. We are going to bring him back, take him with us, whether he will or no, he shall never leave us again. If he is only at home! If we only find him! I will pass the rest of my life in venerating him. Yes, that must be it, do you see, Cosette? Gavroche must have handed my letter to him. It is all explained. You understand."

Cosette did not understand a word.

"You are right," said she to him.

Meanwhile the fiacre rolled on.

NIGHT BEHIND WHICH IS DAWN

At the knock which he heard at his door, Jean Valjean turned his head.

"Come in," said he feebly.

The door opened. Cosette and Marius appeared.

Cosette rushed into the room.

Marius remained upon the threshold, leaning against the casing of the door.

"Cosette!" said Jean Valjean, and he rose in his chair, his arms stretched out and trembling, haggard, livid, terrible, with immense joy in his eyes.

Cosette, stifled with emotion, fell upon Jean Valjean's breast.

"Father!" said she.

Jean Valjean, beside himself, stammered:

"Cosette! she? you, madame? it is you, Cosette? Oh, my God!"

And, clasped in Cosette's arms, he exclaimed:

"It is you, Cosette? you are here? You forgive me then!"

Marius, dropping his eyelids that the tears might not fall, stepped forward and murmured between his lips which were contracted convulsively to check the sobs:

"Father!"

"And you too, you forgive me!" said Jean Valjean.

Marius could not utter a word, and Jean Valjean added: "Thanks."

Cosette took off her shawl and threw her hat upon the bed.

"They are in my way," said she.

And, seating herself upon the old man's knees, she stroked away his white hair with an adorable grace, and kissed his forehead.

Jean Valjean, bewildered, offered no resistance.

Cosette, who had but a very confused understanding of all this, redoubled her caresses, as if she would pay Marius' debt.

Jean Valjean faltered:

"How foolish we are! I thought I should never see her again. Only think, Monsieur Pontmercy, that at the moment you came in, I was saying to myself: It is over. There is her little dress, I am a miserable man, I shall never see Cosette again, I was saying that at the very moment you were coming up the stairs. Was not I silly? I was as silly as that! But we reckon without God. God said: You think that you are going to be abandoned, dolt? No. No, it shall not come to pass like that. Come, here is a poor goodman who has need of an angel. And the angel comes; and I see my Cosette again! and I see my darling Cosette again! Oh! I was very miserable!"

For a moment he could not speak, then he continued:

"I really needed to see Cosette a little while from time to time. A heart does want a bone to gnaw. Still I felt plainly that I was in the way. I gave myself reasons: they have no need of you, stay in your corner, you have no right to continue for ever. Oh! bless God, I see her again! Do you know, Cosette, that your husband is very handsome? Ah, you have a pretty embroidered collar, yes, yes. I like that pattern. Your husband chose it, did not he? And then, Cosette, you must have cashmeres. Monsieur Pontmercy, let me call her Cosette. It will not be very long."

And Cosette continued again:

"How naughty to have left us in this way! Where have you been why were you away so long? Your journeys did not use to last more than three or four days. I sent Nicolette, the answer always was: He is absent. How long since you returned? Why did not you let us know? Do you know that you are very much changed. Oh! the naughty father! he has been sick, and we did not know it! Here, Marius, feel his hand, how cold it is!"

"So you are here, Monsieur Pontmercy, you forgive me!" repeated Jean Valjean.

At these words, which Jean Valjean now said for the second time, all that was swelling in Marius' heart found an outlet, he broke forth:

"Cosette, do you hear? that is the way with him! he begs my pardon, and do you know what he has done for me, Cosette? he has saved my life. He has done more. He has given you to me. And, after having saved me, and after having given you to me, Cosette, what did he do with himself? he sacrificed himself. There is the man. And, to me the ungrateful, to me the forgetful, to me the pitiless, to me the guilty, he says: Thanks! Cosette, my whole life passed at the feet of this man would be too little. That barricade, that sewer, that furnace, that cloaca, he went through everything for me, for you, Cosette! He bore me through death in every form which he put aside from me, and which he accepted for himself. All courage, all virtue, all heroism, all sanctity, he has it all, Cosette, that man is an angel!"

"Hush! hush!" said Jean Valjean in a whisper. "Why tell all that?"

"But you!" exclaimed Marius, with a passion in which veneration was mingled, "why have not you told it? It is your fault, too. You save people's lives, and you hide it from them! You do more, under pretense of unmasking yourself and calumniate yourself. It is frightful."

"I told the truth," answered Jean Valjean.

"No," replied Marius, "the truth is the whole truth; and you did not tell it. You were Monsieur Madeleine, why not have said so? You had saved Javert, why not have said so? I owe my life to you, why not have said so?"

"Because I thought as you did. I felt that you were right. It was necessary that I should go away. If you had known that affair of the sewer, you would have made me stay with you. I should then have had to keep silent. If I had spoken, it would have embarrassed all."

"Embarrassed what? embarrassed whom?" replied Marius. "Do you suppose you are going to stay here? We are going to carry you back. Oh! my God! when I think it was by accident that I learned it all! We are going to carry you back. You are a part of us. You are her father and mine. You shall not spend another day in this horrid house. Do not imagine that you will be here to-morrow."

"To-morrow," said Jean Valjean, "I shall not be here, but I shall not be at your house."

"What do you mean?" replied Marius. "Ah now, we shall allow no more journeys. You shall never leave us again. You belong to us. We will not let you go."

"This time, it is for good," added Cosette. "We have a carriage below. I am going to carry you off. If necessary, I shall use force."

And laughing, she made as if she would lift the old man in her arms.

There was a noise at the door. It was the physician coming in.

"Good-day and good-by, doctor," said Jean Valjean. "Here are my poor children."

Marius approached the physician. He addressed this single word to him: "Monsieur?" but in the manner of pronouncing it, there was a complete question.

The physician answered the question by an expressive glance.

"Because things are unpleasant," said Jean Valjean, "that is no reason for being unjust towards God."

There was a silence. All hearts were oppressed.

Jean Valjean turned towards Cosette. He began to gaze at her as if he would take a look which should endure through eternity. At the depth of shadow to which he had already descended, ecstasy was still possible to him while beholding Cosette. The reflection of that sweet countenance illumined his pale face. The sepulchre may have its enchantments.

The physician felt his pulse.

"Ah! it was you he needed!" murmured he, looking at Cosette and Marius.

And, bending towards Marius' ear he added very low:

"Too late."

Jean Valjean, almost without ceasing to gaze upon Cosette, turned upon Marius and the physician a look of serenity. They heard these almost inarticulate words come from his lips:

"It is nothing to die; it is frightful not to live."

Suddenly he arose. These returns of strength are sometimes a sign also of the death-struggle. He walked with a firm step to the wall, put aside Marius and the physician, who offered to assist him, took down from the wall the little copper crucifix which hung there, came back, and sat down with all the freedom of motion of perfect health, and said in a loud voice, laying the crucifix on the table:

"Behold the great martyr."

Then his breast sank in, his head wavered, as if the dizziness of the tomb seized him, and his hands resting upon his knees, began to clutch at his pantaloons.

Cosette supported his shoulders, and sobbed, and attempted to speak to him, but could not. There could be distinguished, among the words mingled with that mournful saliva which accompanies tears, sentences like this: "Father! do not leave us. Is it possible that we have found you again only to lose you?"

The agony of death may be said to meander. It goes, comes, advances towards the grave, and returns towards life. There is some groping in the act of dying.

Jean Valjean, after this semi-syncope, gathered strength, shook his forehead as if to throw off the darkness, and became almost completely lucid once more. He took a fold of Cosette's sleeve, and kissed it.

"He is reviving! doctor, he is reviving!" cried Marius.

"You are both kind," said Jean Valjean. "I will tell you what has given me pain. What has given me pain, Monsieur Pontmercy, was that you have been unwilling to touch that money. That money really belongs to your wife. I will explain it to you, my children, on that account I am glad to see you. The black jet comes from England, the white jet comes from Norway. All this is in the paper you see there, which you will read. For bracelets, I invented the substitution of clasps made by bending the metal, for clasps made by soldering the metal. They are handsomer, better, and cheaper. You understand how much money can be made. So Cosette's fortune is really her own. I give you these particulars so that your minds may be at rest."

The portress had come up, and was looking through the half-open door. The physician motioned her away, but he could not prevent that good, zealous woman from crying to the dying man before she went:

"Do you want a priest?"

"I have one," answered Jean Valjean.

And, with his finger, he seemed to designate a point above his head, where, you would have said, he saw some one.

It is probable that the Bishop was indeed a witness of this death-agony.

Cosette slipped a pillow under his back gently.

Jean Valjean resumed:

"Monsieur Pontmercy, have no fear, I conjure you. The six hundred thousand francs are really Cosette's. I shall have lost my life if you do not enjoy it! We succeeded very well in making glass-work. We rivalled what is called Berlin jewellery. Indeed, the German black glass cannot be compared with it. A gross, which contains twelve hundred grains very well cut, costs only three francs."

When a being who is dear to us is about to die, we look at him with a look which clings to him, and which would hold him back. Both, dumb with anguish, knowing not what to say to death, despairing and trembling, they stood before him, Marius holding Cosette's hand.

From moment to moment, Jean Valjean grew weaker. He was sinking; he was approaching the dark horizon. His breath had become intermittent; it was interrupted by a slight rattle. He had difficulty in moving his wrist, his feet had lost all motion, and, at the same time that the distress of the limbs and the exhaustion of the body increased, all the majesty of the soul rose and displayed itself upon his forehead. The light of the unknown world was already visible in his eye.

His face grew pale, and at the same time smiled. Life was no longer present, there was something else. His breath died away, his look grew grand. It was a corpse on which you felt wings.

He motioned to Cosette to approach, then to Marius; it was evidently the last minute of the last hour, and he began to speak to them in a voice so faint it seemed to come from afar, and you would have said that there was already a wall between them and him.

"Come closer, come closer, both of you. I love you dearly. Oh! it is good to die so! You too, you love me, my Cosette. I knew very well that you still had some affection for your old goodman. How kind you are to put this cushion under my back! You will weep for me a little, will you not? Not too much. I do not wish you to have any deep grief. You must amuse yourselves a great deal, my children. I forgot to tell you that on buckles without tongues still more is made than on anything else. A gross, twelve dozen, costs ten francs, and sells for sixty. That is really a good business. So you need not be astonished at the six hundred thousand francs, Monsieur Pontmercy. It is honest money. You can be rich without concern. You must have a carriage, from time to time a box at the theatres, beautiful ball dresses, my Cosette, and then give good dinners to your friends, be very happy. I was writing just now to Cosette. She will find my letter. To her I bequeathe the two candlesticks which are on the mantel. They are silver; but to me they are gold, they are diamond; they change the candles which are put into them, into consecrated tapers. I do not know whether he who gave them to me is satisfied with me in heaven. I have done what I could. My children, you will not forget that I am a poor man, you will have me buried in the most convenient piece of ground under a stone to mark the spot. That is my wish. No name on the stone. If Cosette will come for a little while sometimes, it will give me a pleasure. You too, Monsieur Pontmercy. I must confess to you that I have not always loved you; I ask your pardon. Now, she and you are but one to me. I am very grateful to you. I feel that you make Cosette happy. If you knew, Monsieur Pontmercy, her beautiful rosy cheeks were my joy; when I saw her a little pale, I was sad. There is a five hundred franc bill in the bureau. I have not touched it. It is for the poor. Cosette, do you see your little dress, there on the bed? do you recognise it? Yet it was only ten years ago. How time passes! We have been very happy. It is over. My children, do not weep, I am not going very far, I shall see you from there. You will only have to look when it is night, you will see me smile. Cosette, do you remember Montfermeil? You were in the wood, you were very frightened; do you remember when I took the handle of the water-bucket? That was the first time I touched your poor little hand. It was so cold! Ah! you had red hands in those days, mademoiselle, your hands are very white now. And the great doll! do you remember? you called her Catharine. You regretted that you did not carry her to the convent. How you made me laugh sometimes, my sweet angel! When it had rained you launched spears of straw in the gutters, and you watched them. One day, I gave you a willow battledore, and a shuttlecock with yellow, blue, and green feathers. You have forgotten it. You were so cunning when you were little! You played. You put cherries in your ears. Those are things of the past. The forests through which we have passed with our child, the trees under which we have walked, the convents in which we have hidden, the games, the free laughter of childhood, all is in shadow. I imagined that all that belonged to me. There was my folly. Those Thénardiers were wicked. We must forgive them. Cosette, the time has come to tell you the name of your mother. Her name was Fantine. Remember that name: Fantine. Fall on your knees whenever you pronounce it. She suffered much. And loved you much. Her measure of unhappiness was as full as yours of happiness. Such are the distributions of God. He is on high, he sees us all, and he knows what he does in the midst of his great stars. So I am going away, my children. Love each other dearly always. There is scarcely anything else in the world but that: to love one another. You will think sometimes of the poor old man who died here. O my Cosette! it is not my fault, indeed, if I have not seen you all this time, it broke my heart; I went as far as the corner of the street, I must have seemed strange to the people who saw me pass, I looked like a crazy man, once I went out with no hat. My children, I do not see very clearly now, I had some things more to say, but it makes no difference. Think of me a little. You are blessed creatures. I do not know what is the matter with me, I see a light. Come nearer. I die happy. Let me put my hands upon your dear beloved heads."

Cosette and Marius fell on their knees, overwhelmed, choked with tears, each grasping one of Jean Valjean's hands. Those august hands moved no more.

He had fallen backwards, the light from the candlesticks fell upon him; his white face looked up towards heaven, he let Cosette and Marius cover his hands with kisses; he was dead.

The night was starless and very dark. Without doubt, in the gloom some mighty angel was standing, with outstretched wings, awaiting the soul.

THE END

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